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# POEMS

BY

## WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

VOL. II.

*MONOLOGUES AND LYRICS*

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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# DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES AND NARRATIVES.

## GINEVRA DA SIENA.

"Meglio é morir che trarre
Selvaggia vita in solitudin, dove
A niun sei caro e di nessun ti cale."
*Saul di Alfieri*, scena 4, atto 1.

"Love is a greater lawe (by my pan)
Than may be yeven of any erthly man;
And therfore positif lawe, and swiche decree
Is broken all day for love in eche degree.
A man moste nedes love maugre his head.
He may not fleen it, though he shuld be ded,
All be she maid or widewe or elles wif."
CHAUCER: *The Knight's Tale.*

So then you 've come at last, my own best friend,
My youth's friend — never friends like those of youth!
I had not thought to see your face again,
Nor any human face that pitied me.
Now let me weep upon your breast; my heart,
Dried up within me, seems to swell again
At your soft touch of pity — let me weep!
My tears so long have burnt me, but these tears,
Like rain on withered grass, bring up again
The old spring greenness. Oh! at last, at last.
This passionate tension of my life gives way.
The desolating sand-spout whirled along
My desert life, and straining up for years

All feelings, thoughts, and hopes, breaks down at last;
So, let me weep here — at your very feet;
Lift me not up — it soothes and calms me so.
See! what a poor, bruised, broken thing am I!
But you, dear Nina, knew me ere this brow
Was ruled with wrinkles, ere the thick dark hair
Which clustered round it grew so thin and white;
One curl at least remains of what it was,
And still you wear it in your locket, love.
You yet are fair. Stop! let me look at you;
How young you are, and I, so old, — so old!
'T is only happiness can keep us young.
Then, how should I be young, imprisoned here
In this drear villa, all my turbulent thoughts
Storming against my fate, my hopes burnt out,
My heart the crater where their scoriæ lie!
Yet all keeps young about me; all 's the same
As I beheld it when a little girl.
These walls are still the same; the sky 's the same;
The same sad stretches, the same undimmed stars;
The olives are not changed; there stand the pines,
Murmuring and sighing still; clouds come and go,
Just as they did when I was young and gay:
And looking on them thus, year after year,
So changeless, while 't is all so changed with me,

Half maddens me at times. They seem to mock
With their perennial youth my vanished joys.
Here, in this room, I was so happy once!
Here, in this room, I am so wretched now!
My ghost — a pleasant, laughing, careless ghost —
Walks down along that terrace. See! 't is there!
And yours is with it. Ah! one sees that 's yours;
But mine — who 'd ever dream that once was I?

Look now, it beckons, laughs, and flings a flower.
Off! off! I hate you; vanish from my sight:
There — down the cypresses go — go, I say;
Vanish! and never let me see you more.

'T is gone now — gone — would it were never there!
Mere fancy, Rosa says — perhaps she 's right —
Such tricks things play us. Do not look so strange;
Who can avoid all meetings with one's ghost?
And yours, does yours come never from the past,
From corners dim of olden days and dreams,
To whisper words that almost drive you mad?
Ah! I forget! You are so happy still,
And joy's gay laughter chases ghosts away.

Well, we 'll not talk of that, nor think of that,
Only don't look so sad and shake your head;
You know I do not think 't was really there,
But then it somehow seemed as if it were
Just for a moment's space. Pray bear with me,

And if my ways and words to you seem strange,
Don't mind them, dearest; living all alone
We get fantastic notions, and one's talk
Grows wild with too long talking to one's self.
But now you come and love me, I am strong;
You, with your happy smile, scared from my breast . . .
Well, well — no matter what, — 't is fled away;
You see it 's gone now — look, there 's nothing here.
Let them all go; one leap to other days.
My heart is almost light to see your face.
Oh! kiss me, dearest, kiss me yet once more —
How it smooths out the tangles in my brain —
And put your hand in mine: believe me, dear,
For years I have not felt so sane and calm.

I 'll write upon your heart as on a book.
If I go over all the old, old days,
You 'll listen, will you not? I know you will.

Let me go back to when I saw you last.
Our lives till then had close together lain,
Shaped each to each in habit, feeling, thought,
Like almonds twinned within a single shell.
What thought or hope was mine that was not yours?
What joy was mine that was not shared with you?
All was so innocent when we were girls;
Our little walks — the days you spent with me

In the old villa — where, with arms loose clasped
Around each other's waist we roamed along
Among the giant orange-pots that stood
At every angle of our garden-plot,
And told our secrets — while the fountain plashed,
And, waving in the breeze, its veil of mist
Swept o'er our faces. Think of those long hours
We in the arched and open loggia sat
Pricking the bright flowers on our broidery frames,
And as we chatted, lifting oft our eyes,
We gazed at Amiata's purple height,
Trembling behind its opal veil of air;
Or on the nearer slopes through the green lanes,
Fenced either side with rich and running vines,
Watched the white oxen trail their basket-carts,
Or contadine with wide-flapping hats
Singing amid the olives, whose old trunks
Stood knee-deep in the golden fields of grain.
Do you remember the red poppies, too,
That glowed amid the tender green of spring —
The purple larkspur that assumed their place
Mid the sheared stubble of the autumn fields —
The ilex walk — the acacia's fingered twigs —
The rose-hued oleanders peeping o'er
The terraced wall — the slanting wall that propped
Our garden, from whose clefts the caper plants
Spirted their leaves and burst in plumy flowers?
All these are still the same — they do not miss
The eye that loved them so; and yet how oft
I wonder if those old magnolia-trees

Still feed the air with their great creamy flowers,
And show the wind their rusted under-leaf.
I wonder if that trumpet flower is dead.
Oh heaven! they all should be, I loved them so;
Some one has killed them, if they have not died.

But you can see the villa any day,
And I am wearying you. Yet all these things
Are beads upon the rosary of youth,
And just to say their names recalls those hours
So full of joy — each bead is like a prayer.
How many an hour I 've sat and dreamed of them
And dear Siena, with its Campo tower
That seems to fall against the trooping clouds,
And the great Duomo with its pavement rich,
Till sick at heart I felt that I must die.
People are kneeling there upon it now,
But I shall never kneel there any more;
And bells ring out on happy festivals,
And all the pious people flock to mass,
But I shall never go there any more.
How all these little things come back to me
That I shall never see — no, never more!
Oh, kiss the pavement, dear, when you go back!
Whisper a prayer for me where once I knelt,
And tell the dead stones how I love them still.

These little things, — ah, suffer, love, like me!
You 'll know how all these memories live and
sting;

Even lifeless things, that scarce with conscious sense
We gaze upon in sorrow or in joy,
Cling to our joy and sorrow close as life.
Things, too, at discord with our lifted mood
Their trivial figure on the mind will stamp
So deep that time can never wipe it out;
Yes, even the pattern of the pavement there,
Its stones a step apart on which I trod
In torturing hours, are printed on my heart
Like some essential part of all I felt;
And when the pang comes back, they, too, return.

As we two wandered, little ignorant girls,
With childish talk and childish wonder then,
What did we know of life? — 't was all a play —
A picture — some few pretty shifting scenes
Set in the magic lantern of our youth.
What could we know, we little hermits, then? —
Watched over, tended, gently led along
A path with ne'er a stone to trip us up;
Reading such innocent books, going to mass,
Saying our Aves every morn and eve;
Never let go beyond a vigilant eye
To watch where danger hovered; caged like birds
In our home aviary, where we sang,
And fluttered round, but never could get out;
Where, though the eagle and the swooping hawk
Were ranging round, we were so safe from them.

How were we fit, thus nurtured, to be loosed
Upon the world? One might as well set free
The frail canary, bred within a cage.
Oh! in the storm and buffet of my life
My heart has flown so often back again,
And beat the bars that could not let me in.

Look at the foolish way in which we 're trained,
And say, how can it fit us for the world?
The doctrine and the mass, of course, we 're taught;
Then comes our first communion in the fold
Of some clean convent, 'mid the patient nuns,
Whose minds and lives are stunted at the best.
What can they teach except hypocrisy,
To check the natural currents of our youth?
Through their religious panes they show the world
All glare and falseness — yet we sigh for it;
Then, taken back, we 're kept beneath a glass,
Like some frail plant that cannot bear the breeze.
For home is but a kind of convent, where
Our mother is the abbess — we the nuns;
We learn our letters, but there 's nought to read
Save tedious homilies and bloodless books.
Life is more real, so we sigh for it —
Not life on this side marriage, but beyond.

For what is life so-called to us poor girls —
Embroidery and trivial talk at home,

Dressing and pinching, the lute, and then
A dull and formal walk on the parade,
Where we may learn to smile and bow with ease.
Sometimes convoyed into society,
Our mother leads us with a careful string,
And lets us hop a little way alone;
But watching us the while with Argus eyes,
And lecturing our manners and our words.
Peeps at the world, from under down-dropped lids
Of fear and innocence, we catch; we 're told
That this we must not do — nor that — nor that;
All that we long for is prohibited.
Burn though we may for liberty and joy,
In whose fresh air the heart alone expands,
With little worldly maxims we are drilled;
Calm and reserve alone are maidenly.
We must not speak unless our mother nods.
So life, with all its stern realities
To us is vague, as is a blind man's thought
Of colors, or a deaf man's dream of sounds.

Some day our mother calls us to her room,
Count This, Marchese That, has asked our hand —
She says, "'T is all arranged for you, my dear;
He 's rich and young, and of such noble birth,
We could not ask or hope a better match;
I and your father both are satisfied."

"But I," you cry, "'t is I must marry him;
And I am yet so young, so happy here.
Besides, I've scarcely seen him, know him not —
How can I marry if I do not love?"
"Love — love, of course; first marry, and then
love!"

Thus marriage opens unto us the door
That leads to liberty, if not to love.
When we are married, we at least are free;
So, unprepared in ignorant innocence,
We rush to marriage just for freedom's sake.

What could I hope? My little bark put forth
Into the stormy world, and made a wreck,
And here I rot — all dashed to pieces here!

Look at that ghastly hulk there on the beach —
That broken, bare-ribbed skeleton that lies
Deep sunken in the barred and shelving sand;
'T was a gay vessel launched in pride and joy,
With streaming banners and with music, once —
Look at it now! Then turn and look at me!
Are we not both the same sad broken wrecks?
Still old thoughts cling, the shells and barnacles
Of happy days, when through the southern seas
Of youth my keel went rushing joyously,
And all my pennons flew, and my white sails
Rounded their bosom to the swelling air.

You know the Count, the husband that they gave —
Cold, stern, impassive, like an angled wall —
Squared to his duties — rigorous, even, hard —
I beat myself to death against that wall.
He married me as he would buy a horse,
Then all was over. "Put it in the stall,
Caparison it well for gala days,
Break it to worldly paces with a curb,
And give it best of food and best of straw."
Kind treatment this, you say: what would you more?
Nothing, unless one has a heart and brain;
And I, alas! was born with one at least.

Ask of the world his character — they 'll say,
An honorable man formed to respect,
Proud of his birth; but who would not be proud?
Refined, exact, punctilious; one, in fact,
Safely to trust in great and little things.

Well, then, I trusted him with all I had.
Now, ask of me what was the noble Count?
The world 's half right; but half right 's wholly wrong.

Fair was his outward seeming — manners fair —
A little stiff with over-courtesy,
Like to those rich brocades all sewn in gold;
But noble, I agree, and dignified.

The apricot is smooth upon the skin,
And yet it only has a stone for heart.
What education teaches, he had learned;
But on a rock you cannot graft a rose.
Still, stoniest natures have their sunward side;
And there with him his pride and honor grew.
The shortest line's the straightest 'twixt two points,
And the frank nature takes it openly.
His nature was secretive: on his path,
Lead where it would, he loved no human eye;
Dark windings, devious ways, he rather chose,
Fifty miles round, beyond the sight of man,
Rather than one across in open view.
His good and bad alike he loved to hide;
Spoke little, hated praise — suspected it —
And yet was flattered by obedient acts.
Passions he had, but he had mastered them,
And loved and hated in a bloodless way;
But never was with generous anger fired,
Nor blazed to indignation at a wrong.
His impulses he doubted — would not stir
To passion's trumpet; but lay long in wait,
Ambushed — then struck with slow and proud resolve,
And called it justice when he took revenge.

His dark impassive face was cold as bronze;
His mouth locked up in silence like a chest
Whose key is lost, or drawn as it had worn

A life-long curb; his forehead full and bare,
Where not a wrinkle told what passed within.
Sometimes his hands would twitch when he was moved,
But not his lips — no, nor his cold round eyes,
From which he shut all meaning at his will;
While, like an intricate machine, his mind
With counter-wheels worked out the simplest act.

There is my master! there 's the inside man!
Why further then dissect? He, proud and cold,
Reserved, and hating every show of heart;
I, warm, impetuous, urged by impulses —
Demanding love in words and tones and acts.
Could we two live together? Yes; as lives
The passionate wave with the affronting cliff,
Fretting in quiet seasons, madly dashed
With useless violence when roused in storm.
How many a time, in longings vast and vain,
I rushed towards him — strove to overclimb
His walled-up nature, and, forced back again,
Fell with a wild lament into myself,
Shattered with struggle, in a dull despair.
When in fierce mood I once o'erstept the line
Of rigid prudence, strict punctilio,
And in strong language railed against the world,
With all its busy, peeping, prying eyes,
He turned with half a smile and half a frown,
And used a figure — 't was the first and last

He ever used save one — "You like these
tropes —
Here 's one : your sail is larger than your craft ;
Take heed the first gale do not sweep you down."

"Better go down," I cried, "on the broad sea,
Battling a noble voyage with wind and wave,
Than rot inactive, anchored in the port,
Fixed stem and stern, a hopeless, helpless hulk.
What if I vail my spirit-sails in fear
And creep to shelter for ignoble rest? —
The dullest wreck will at its cable strain
When from the outer sea the great swell rolls,
And no poor creature with a heart and brain
But in the stagnant harbor of routine
Feels stormy lifts of longing — pants for life,
And strains to grapple with some noble task."

He smiled half-sneering, and then coldly said,
"The noblest task is to command one's self ; "
And then I knew how huge a fool I was,
And locked my life and longings in my heart.

But after all 't is love that most we need ;
Love only satisfies our woman's heart,
And even our ambition looks to love ;
That given, life is light — denied, is death.
Man is content to know that he is loved,
And tires the constant phrase "I love " to hear;
But woman doubts the instrument is broke
Unless she daily hear the sweet refrain.

Thus life went on for three long weary years.
I should have fallen broken to the earth
The last sad year, but one hope buoyed me up —
I was to be a mother. Ah! the dream
Of that dear face, long, long before it came,
Shone in my thoughts with strange pathetic light,
Like the moon shining in a snake-filled dell —
Something at last to have which I could love!
Oh! how I prayed that it might be a boy,
And mediate 'twixt that iron heart and mine.
Who knew? The sternest natures are not whole;
Some vulnerable point there is in all,
Where they were held when dipped into the Styx —
Some mother's touch where you can reach the quick.
So with this reed I helped my hope along,
And, waiting patient, said, "If 't is a boy
'T will touch his pride — his pride may touch his love."

Our boy was born, and my prophetic heart,
Like other prophets, mixed the true and false;
His pride was touched — his love was still unborn.
In his first joy there seemed a kind of mist
About his heart — it passed like breath on steel;
At sudden times, as if against his will,
Words almost tender from his lips there came,
Then chased away as weak and out of place;

So with an iron glove one wipes a tear
Quickly, as not belonging to a man.

Sometimes I held him up unto the Count,
And, smothering him with kisses, cried aloud,
"Is he not lovely? oh, my life in life!
My little angel out of paradise!
Say, is he not too dear to stay with us?"
Then he — "Why always thus exaggerate?
An angel? no, a good stout healthy boy;
And dear, of course, because he is our child."
Yet this I thought was half in awkwardness
(Men are so, often, even when they love),
And that he could not bring his lips to say
What stirred within; for often ere he rode
I heard his steps along the terrace clang,
And, through the lattice looking, saw him take
Our Angelo, who stretched out both his arms,
And crowing strove with aimless hands to clutch
The nodding feather streaming from his cap;
While he would laugh, and with his black beard brush
The little rosy cheek, or with his lips
Catch the fat fingers of those dimpled hands;
The little creature, not the least afraid,
Would seize his beard, and scream his baby scream,
Or pat the cold steel plate above his heart.
Thus far it went — no farther. Love to him
Was like the glitter on that cold steel plate;

The gleam of pride — not the impassioned ray
That warms and glows through all the inner life.

I strove to recompense this aching want,
This thirsting for a sympathetic soul,
With thinking of my child and loving him.
But childish love is pure and innocent,
It cannot answer to the passion's call;
And hopeless, with a cruel load at heart,
I held my way unhappy and alone.

Beat as I would the bars that girt me round,
From my stern prison of necessity
No outlet opened save into the air;
And sitting sorrowing there, my wandering thoughts
Fled far and wild, and built ideal dreams,
And happy homes made beautiful by love;
Yet still the end was, dropping with a groan
Down to the same unhappy earth of fact,
More wretched for the joys that could not be.

I linger here — for here there came a change.
From this long distance, which is like to height,
I see the landscape of my life below.
There is its childhood's little garden plot,
Its weary marsh of stagnant womanhood,
Its one highway of duty — dusty, hard,
And leading nowhere. Eagle-like I plane
Above its drear Maremma solitudes,

Where there is ne'er a bird to sing of love;
And, rising far along the horizon's verge,
Behold the darkening storm come crowding up,
And know the lightnings that are hidden there.

Well, let me say it all at once: I loved.
My heart, long straining with its strong desires,
And hungered with a vague and craving want,
Snapped all at once its harsh and formal bands.
I stood alone within a clouded wood,
When sudden sunlight burst upon my path;
A scent of unknown flowers filled all the air —
The single cymbal with another clashed,
And wild triumphant music shook my thoughts.
We met — ah, fatal hour! we met and loved;
My heart rushed to him as the tideless lake,
Nearing the sheer precipitous abyss,
Rushes to ruin, and with one wild burst
Of storm and splendor down the rapids whirling,
Leaps, white with passion, to the lake below.
Vainly the trees along the shadowy shores,
Quivering with fear, cry to the rapids, "Stop!"
Vainly the hillsides strive to hold them back;
God's glorious rainbow o'er their terror glowing,
They rush to ruin, as we rushed to ours.

I was not guilty — guilty then of what?
Say, is the aloe guilty when it bursts
To its consummate flower, death though it bring?
If our two hearts, surcharged like wandering
clouds

With love's intensest electricity,
Borne by the rushing winds from north and south,
Sent down the blasting lightnings when they struck
In heaven's broad dome, if without will they met,
Was it our fault? No; guilt is prearranged,
Is wilful — it demands consent at least.
How could we help it, if we met and loved?
If this be guilt, then nature is all guilt.
The love I bear my mother and my child,
The very hope of heaven itself, is guilt;
The very wind that blows, the eye that sees,
The heart that beats, are guilty, one and all.
What nature works in man and thing alike
Is innocent. I could not help but love.

My head is troubled by these swarming thoughts,
But I have need to speak, so let me speak.
Hark! is that he? Oh, save me from that man!
Save me! No, no, you shall not strike him here!
Stab at him through my heart, then, if you will!

Oh yes, I see. 'T was but the jarring door,
The wind. Oh yes, I see — only the door.
'T is past. I am not weak; let me go on.
No, dearest, no, no, no; let me go on.

The tears are in your eyes; I see the tears.
Mine are all wept away, years, years ago.

Oh keep your heart wide open ; take therein
The floods that from grief's open sluices pours,
And pity, pity what you cannot change.
Give me your sympathy : I have not found
For such long years a patient pitying heart,
That now I feel that I must speak or die.
From fearful nightmares starting suddenly,
How sweet to tell the horrors we have passed,
Knowing they all have passed : so sweet to me
These dreadful passages of life to tell —
That never, never, will be wholly past.

We met — we loved. Oh, what a world there lies
In those four words ! 'T was in the summer days
When first we met — the last dear day of June,
That was the day — and love from bud to flower
Rushed with the sudden passion of our clime.
You know the shadowy laurel avenue,
Where, sheltered from the sun, we used to stroll
Those summer mornings when we both were girls ;
And you remember, through the vista seen,
How the pomegranate blossoms glowed like fire
Against the old gray wall above the door ;
'T was there, beneath those flowers, I saw him first.
There, walking in the avenue alone,
I heard the Count, my husband, call my name,

And looking round, just in the shadow there,
I saw him standing at my husband's side.
"Ginevra," said the Count, "my cousin here
Claims you as cousin too, since we are one.
I bring him here to you, for I am forced
(Against my will, I scarcely need to say)
To change a private joy for public care,
And leave him for a time in better hands.
My kinsman graciously excuses me
My forced departure for some hours; till then
You 'll do the honors of our house for me,
And I alone shall suffer all the loss.
Ginevra, entertain our noble friend
With all that our poor villa can afford,
And piece its want out with the best of will."
So speaking, in his formal, courteous way,
He took his leave, and we were left alone.
You see he left us there; me fair and young —
I was so young then, and they called me fair —
He in the full completed prime of youth,
When all the blood runs riot in the veins,
And speaks from out the cheeks and lips and eyes.
Oh, Count, was this well done to leave us so?

He touched my hand, and bore it to his lips.
'T was but a common courtesy; and yet
That touch ran through me like electric fire,
Thrilling my every nerve. At once his look,
By some peculiar mastery, seemed to seize

And to possess me, and I felt within
A tremulous movement in my thoughts, as when
The needle blindly struggles towards the pole.
He too was moved — his color came and went;
We neither were at ease, we knew not why;
And so together, side by side, we strayed
Through the clipped alleys of the laurel walk, —
Or 'neath the shadow of the cypresses
We paused, — or, leaning on the parapet,
And gazing into purple distances,
Mechanically plucked from out its clefts
Some tiny flower or weed, — or, lingering near
The fountain's marble margin, idly watched
The gold-fish poising in its basin clear;
And while the babbling water gushed and dripped,
And reared its silver column in the sun,
And, over-weighted, dropped in pearls, our talk
Kept centring to our feelings from the range
Of outer facts with which it first began.
Oh golden morning! there you seem to float
Far off in memory, like a sun-flushed cloud,
With roseate lights, and tender dove-like shades;
No lightning in your bosom hid, no threat
Of passion, no remorse and death to come.
The air was faint with orange-flowers; the grove
Throbbed with the beats and thrills of nightingales
Hid in its covert green; along the wall
Flamed the pomegranate's fiery flowers; the rich
Rose clusters of the oleander bloomed

Soft in the violet shadows o'er them cast
By the gray villa. All the garden seemed
To swarm with happy life; the lizard stole
Along the fountain's marge, and stayed to gaze
With a shy confidence; the hawk-moth, poised
Above the roses, thrust his slender trunk
Into their honeyed depths; on gauzy wings
The long green dragonfly in gleaming mail
Kept darting zigzag, hovering to and fro;
Hot bees were bustling in the flowers; with soft
And aimless flutter, painted butterflies
Hung drifting here and there like floating leaves,
Or rested on a weed to spread their wings.
All nature seemed in quiet happiness
To live and move, — and, thoughtless, without fear,
I shared that joy in harmony with it.
Swiftly the morning passed; and yet if hours
By inward change be counted, ere it went
Years had gone by, and life completely changed.

So as we talked, not owning to ourselves
The silent growth of love that was to bear
At last a poison-flower, a sudden voice
Startled us both. I knew it was the Count's,
And in my ear it sounded like a bell
That harshly scares us from a happy dream.
"Where are you?" cried he. "Oh, the Count!" I said,
And started up, and saw him, cold and proud,

Turn the green corner of the laurel hedge,
And stand before us. With a formal speech
He broke the silence, offering excuse
That he had stayed away from us so long,
And asking pardon for disturbing us,
And then began to talk in stately way
Of what in council had been said and done,
As if his world were ours ; and then, aghast,
I saw the chasm those short hours had rent
Between his soul and mine. Like some dull noise
I heard him talking as we walked along,
While all my thoughts were hurrying within
Wildly, and in my breast my fluttering heart
Was beating like a prisoned bird. At last
We reached the house, and to my room I rushed
For silence and for solitude. Once there,
I fell upon my bed, burst into tears,
And hid my face; for then I saw my fate —
Saw it rise up before me like a ghost.

Thus for a week our life went on: each day
The Count, made blind to everything by pride,
And by the vanity of ownership,
Left us along the garden walks to stroll,
Or in the house for hours alone to talk,
Not dreaming that *his* wife could dare to love;
And I was fearless too till every sense
Had drunk Love's sweet insidious poison in.
He was our guest; my husband day by day

Bade me be with him, — and no feigned excuse —
Excuse that was against my will, and yet
Feebly put forth, some barrier to rear
'Twixt love and duty — served to ope his eyes.
He blindly pushed us down that plane whereon
Vainly I sought for stay my course to stop.

How then resist? Duty is strong like will —
Passion like madness! I was wrenched away
From all that used to hold me; not a hand
Reached out to save me. Struggling thus alone,
If I but heard the Count's stern voice below
It seemed to freeze me; all my soul in arms
Started against him. Ah! no help was there.
Oh! how confess to him, and ask for help?

Then all my soul strained out to find a way
Back unto peace at least, if not to joy.
Glancing at all my life now left behind,
What was there to restrain me? Angelo,
My darling Angelo! His little arms,
Clasped close around my neck, should hold me back
From where my life was sweeping rapidly,
Yet all without my will. I grasped at this.
Alas! it had no strength to save me then.

We walk along with such a fearless trust
Through unknown dangers; yet our death may lie

Within one drop of poison that the ring
On a friend's hand may hold. One whispered word
May shake the avalanche down upon our head —
One moment more or less destroy or save.
The whole vast world without, and that within,
Turn on a pivot's point, and, jarred from that,
Both universes into ruin rush.

'T was thus with me: before, at least, secure,
And if not happy yet without a fear;
And now a word, an hour, had changed my life.
A word? an hour? Ah, no! for years and years,
The train within my being had been laid.
My cruel disappointments, broken hopes,
And crushed desires — a black and ugly mass,
Were powder to a single spark of love;
Oh! bid *that*, touched by fire, not to explode.

But ah, the bliss of loving and the pain!
For I had never lived until I loved;
Yet evermore a terror 'neath the bliss
Constrained it, like some fearful undertow,
That dimples the smooth river's sunlit brim,
To drag the stoutest swimmer down to death.

On, on, my thoughts went — there was no return;
One backward step no soul can ever take.
My life thus far had been as dull and dead

As a deserted eagle's nest that hangs
In the black shadow of an Alpine cliff —
The shining saint-like heights too far above,
The humble valley's peace too far below.
Wild, gusty, furious, with a moment's wrench
The hurricane of passion swept me down,
And, swirled along by fierce tumultuous thoughts,
Torn from the past, the future all unknown,
I hovered 'twixt the sky and the abyss.

Broken in body, spent in soul, at last
I gave myself to Fate. Do what thou wilt,
I cried, my strength is gone — I yield to thee;
Crush me or save me, I can strive no more.
Thus all my sudden passion cried in me;
But better thoughts at last with time arose.
Perhaps, perhaps, I said, he does not love;
'T was my own heart that shone upon his face.
Oh! if it be so, all may yet be safe,
And I will hide my secret from his eyes,
And only act and speak as friends may do.
Yes, let me struggle for a while, and then,
This visit over, I can die alone.

Oh, vain, vain, vain! day after day I saw
That love consumed his heart as well as mine.
Fate set its face against us from the first.
Day after day we could not help but meet.
All stay, all resolution formed between
Our constant meetings, when we met, gave way.

We could not dash the cup down from our lips,
Despite the poison that we knew it held.
He strove to make excuses to depart,
But still he lingered; and in constant fear
Each that our love might blaze into an act,
Or that a word might make our love a crime,
Life rushed along in terrible pretence.

But oh, how dear for all their pain they were,
Those blissful, fearful days! Left all alone —
For every morning went the Count to town,
And Guido sometimes would not brook excuse —
We ranged the garden 'neath the laurel shade;
Or, where the waving trumpet-flowers outstretched
Their red tubes, shaken by the buried bees,
We sat together, hiding as we could
With veil of words the life that glowed beneath.
But even the widest circle of our talk,
Strive as we would, drew to one centre — love;
And there he told me of his early days,
And all his early hopes and joys and pains,
And painted his ideal of a life:
Oh what a life it was! — but not for us.
And then upon the pure stream of his voice
Such songs of poets slid into my soul;
So sad, too, that they brought the brimming tears:
And oft like poplars quivering in the breeze
We trembled with the joy we dared not own;

And oft we started up on some excuse,
And left each other when we could not bear
Our overburden — I to weep and pray,
And he, dear heart, I think, to do the same.

One day we talked of rings as there we sat —
Of Cleopatra's she dissolved and drank,
And of Morone's, whence a devil spake.
And I by chance upon my finger wore
This which I wear forever now, when he,
Taking my hand and looking at this ring —
"Give it to me," said, jesting; "I will swear
I 'll ne'er dissolve it Cleopatra-like;
'T is but a little thing — for friendship's sake
Give it to me, and when I look at it
I 'll hear an angel, not a devil, speak."
I answered, bantering, "Shall I give it you
To put upon the first fair lady's hand
You fall in love with, or to boast to men
Here is a trophy? No, Sir Guido, no;
You think you 'll keep it, but I know you men."

"Now Heaven be witness, never shall it leave
This hand of mine if you 'll but put it there.
Shall I make oath? Then hear me, cousin mine:
I swear to keep the ring while life shall last;
And lest it fall into unworthy hands,
Dying I 'll send it back to you again.

So when it comes without me, pray for me."
"So serious," answered I; "then take the ring,
And we shall see if man can keep his oath."

I knew the inward struggle — loved him more
The more I saw him fight against his Fate.
His acts were only common courtesies,
And ne'er a word betrayed what throbbed within.
Yet were words wanting? Ah! we read too well
The passion burning in each other's face,
That would not be concealed howe'er we strove.
If but my scarf would touch his hand, a flush
Went like a thrill of music o'er his face,
And subtle tones transfigured common words.
At last, convulsed, in one wild hour he told
His desperate love: he flung him at my feet;
His heart cried out, "Oh kill me where I lie,
Here where I kiss the print your foot has made
Upon the grass! Oh, dearer here to die,
Knowing you love me than to weary out
The death of life afar from you, my heaven!"

O God, forgive me! but I loved him so,
That honor for an instant's flash went out.
All my resolves burst like a broken dam,
And "Up!" I wildly cried; "not at my feet,
Here on my heart thy place — here on my heart!"

Then all was over ; once those rash words said,
We never more could meet as we had met ;
Our souls gazed at each other face to face,
And saw in that one look that all was lost.

Yet do not think that guilt then stained our souls.
Guilty of love we were — of nothing else ;
But thus to see him in his agony
Was worse than death. I could not even say,
Go ! — for I feared some sudden desperate end.
I strove to soothe him — *I* to soothe him — *I*
Who burned with fiercer flames than martyrs know :
*I* uttered bitter comfort — stretched my hand
To that poor sufferer burning at my side.
And when he cried, " O God, forgive me now !
And you, Ginevra — oh my fate, my fate ! "
Though death griped at my heart, and passion's self
Struggled with duty for my very life,
" Patience," I cried, " and God will help us both !
Why should we suffer thus who do no wrong ? "
Then starting up, and pacing to and fro,
He madly struck his forehead, crying out,
" Oh ! were there only something to be done,
Not something to be suffered, to be borne."
Or bitter accusations of himself
He uttered, saying, " I have broken faith —

Broken my oath to which I swore myself —
And all is over now. No more dear days,
When I at least can see and feel you near.
'T is over now — ah yes ! — all over now.
I feel the fire-sword whirling round my head
To drive me from you, out of Paradise."

"Oh, say not so — we cannot help our love ;
And though we may not meet as now we meet,
A way may yet be shown we cannot see.
Now go — oh, leave me, Guido, for my heart
Is breaking, and there 's no more life for me ! "
I, longing to console his tortured heart,
And scarcely knowing what I meant myself,
Uttered these words, and tore myself away.

Look at me now — see how I tremble now ;
Think if the memory can tear me thus,
What agony I suffered in that hour.
Oh, dearest Guido — dearest, dearest heart —
It was not sin to love a soul like yours,
For you were made to win and wear the best, —
Not one like me. O cruel, cursed Fate,
Why did I ever live beyond that hour !

How strange the world looked as I wandered back
Into the palace ! what a broken heart
The nightingale had then, that in the grove
Throbbed into song ! what spirit-voices sighed

And mourned amid the cypresses! how dear
The soft blue sky looked, and how peaceful too,
As if to soothe me! Even the house looked
strange,
Like some new place I had not seen before.
I walked as in a dream; I could not bear
The common things — the common speech of
life;
All that I asked was solitude and tears.
For two long weary days I kept my room,
Broken in body, sick to death at heart;
And as I lay all prostrate on the floor
After a sudden agony of tears —
One of those bursts with which the tortured soul
Relieves its passion — came a sudden knock;
It seemed as Death were knocking at the door.
In walked the Count; I started to my feet,
I strove to gather my disordered dress,
And smooth my face, and wipe away my tears.
My soul revolted, and I saw his eye,
Dread as a basilisk's, upon me rest;
A strange expression, never seen before,
Was brandished there. He said, "'T is very
strange
Guido is gone, and leaves a note behind,
More like a riddle than a note; and you" —
His eyes filled up the gap his speech had left.
"Is Guido gone?" I said; I could no more.
For as he spoke these words the whole world
seemed

To slip beneath me — all my world was gone.
Such weight as this upon the suffering heart
Will show itself, however we may strive;
And in an instant all my secret lay
Before his gaze, as when a sudden wind
Blows wide the closed leaves of a fatal book.
He read the page — he never spoke a word,
But paused a moment, read it up and down,
Then turned and left me, terribly alone.

The evening came to that distracting day —
The evening comes at last to every day.
Exhausted, in a hopeless lull of life,
I watched the burning sunset slowly fade,
Till all the clouds from rose had turned to pearl,
And in the sky the silver splendor shone
Of perfect moonlight; on the shadowy trees
The moon looked pitying down, as if it sought
To give me consolation from above,
And Nature seemed to whisper me, "Come forth."
I could not rest, and down the dappled path,
Where light and shade their strange mosaic wove,
Through the old laurels took my aimless way.
There, half as in a dream, I wandered on,
And, weeping, praying, strove to ease my pain.
The laurels murmured, "Ah, we pity you!"
The fountain babbled, "Ah, unhappy one!"
The nightingale sang out, "My heart, my heart!"

And all things seemed to weep and pray with me.
Hark! did I hear a step upon the grass?
Was that a ghost I saw amid the trees?
Or Guido's self? or was my brain disturbed?
No; in the shadow there was Guido's self; —
"Oh, heaven!" I cried. "Oh, Guido! are you here?
Fly — fly at once! Oh, wherefore are you here?"

He rushed to me — and, oh! that glorious face —
So haggard, worn, and ravaged with its woe —
How changed it seemed since I had seen it last!
I cried out, "Go!" but all within me strained
To clasp him, own him, cling around his neck; —
I cried out, "Go!" as one in madness cries,
"Save me!" and leaps to death in an abyss.
A thousand prayers and longings, flinging out
Their grasping hands, reached forward after him,
And love, with all its sails blown sudden out,
Strained at the cable of my weakened will.

"I go — I go!" he cried; "I but returned
To kiss again the ground your feet had pressed,
To watch your far light in the window shine,
To see your wandering shadow there — and then
Plunge back into my desolated world.
But God hath sent you here — He pitied me —

He saw me grovelling like a tortured worm
Crushed in the grass, and reached his hand to me.
I see you, hear you, touch you, once again —
And can it only be to say, Adieu ? "

" Oh, Guido, fly ! " I cried, " for I am weak ;
Fly from me if you love me — I am weak."

He stood a moment, wrestling with himself,
I gazing at him ; then a sudden power
Seemed to transform him. " No ! I will not go !
'T is all in vain — I cannot, will not, go !
Once I have fled, fleeing from joy, from hope,
From life, from heaven. Whose hand then drew me back ?
Who led your footsteps here ? Whose hand I say ?
Fate gives me you at last ! Fate makes you mine ! —
Life is but mockery bereft of you.
Fly, fly with me, and in some distant spot,
Hid from the world, we may be happy yet."

His passion took me as a mighty gale,
Crowded with thunder, drives upon the elm,
Till all its straining branches groaning cry,
And toss their helpless turbulence of leaves,
And fall at last in one despairing crash ;
So, bearing down resolve, and blowing wild

All my disordered thoughts, his passion came.
Defenceless — weakened, both in strength and will —
Against this new arousing from within,
Against this new appealing from without,
Vain was resistance: I was in his arms!
He seemed to hold me there by heaven's own right.
The world was for a moment all forgot —
The world! I had the world there in my arms!
Nothing then seemed so right, so pure, as love.
Yes, I was his, irrevocably his —
Come heaven, come hell, irrevocably his!

'T was but a moment's madness seized me then —
A blank of reason such as comes to one
Who, clinging for his life to some sheer cliff,
Feels his strength going and his senses swim,
And death come swooping down, and longs to drop
And end it all: so, for a moment's space,
I swooned; and then God's voice within me cried
"No!" and awaking, frightened at my fall,
I pushed the dearest thing in life away.
I know not whence I got my strength. Some hand —
Whose hand but God's? — uplifted me. I stood
Trembling on duty's height — but weak, so weak —

And cried, "Oh, Guido, save me! I am yours —
You mine — but only as we both are God's.
Save me! oh, save me! Do not let me fall."

That was a height to die on — but I lived;
Death always comes too early or too late.
Life had its claims for penance — so I lived;
Nor will I murmur more — perhaps 't is just.

Those words of mine, like an electric flash,
Broke the strained storm of madness in his sky,
And the great shadow and the rain came down —
Shadow as of despair, — yet nobler far,
Dearer in his despair than in his pride.
The prayers he uttered for forgiveness then
Were worst of all to bear, — I hear them still
Ring in my ears; that face of his I see
Streaming with tears; and those contorted hands,
Grasping the air, or torturing themselves,
Or wildly flung to heaven, still implore
Our dear Madonna's blessing on my head —
What are so terrible as manhood's tears?
At last we parted — Heaven alone knows how —
And all was over; I was left alone —
Alone? I never more could be alone.

The owl screamed near us in the cypress-tree.
Half-dead, I saw him go as in a dream,
And heard his footsteps down the gravel die.

The gate swung with a clang — "My God! my
God!
Help me!" I moaned; only the owl replied.

I dropped upon the seat — I hid my face
Within my hands; all, all the world seemed gone.
I longed to rise and call him back again,
But my feet failed me. There I sat alone,
Like him, half-marble, in the Arabian tale,
Charmed by foul magic, when a distant sound
Smote on my ears. It was the clash of steel.
I started up, with sudden terror fired,
And towards the gate I rushed. My flying feet
Grating upon the gravel hushed the sound.
I stopped to listen; there it was again —
And voices, too — oh, heaven! Again I fled;
Again I only heard my grating steps.
I gained the gate — I listened — all was still.
The moon broke out behind a cloud, and smote
The pale broad palace front, where nothing
stirred;
Only the tall dark cypresses made moan,
And the hoar olives seemed like ghosts to flee
Across the hillside, where a whisper ran —
"'T was but his sword that jangled on the ground,"
I said; "for see, how all is hushed to rest!
Poor heart of mine, that trembles at a breath,
Be calm again, and cast your fear away.
But ah! the wretched days before we meet —
The sunless days — yet we shall meet again."

The far-off bell upon the Campo tower
Struck twelve as up the terrace-steps I went:
I paused to soothe me with the landscape there.
The shadowy earth was turning in its sleep,
And winds were whispering over it like dreams;
The luminous sky was listening overhead
With its full moon, and few great throbbing stars —
One drowsing like a sick man, sad and dark;
One watching like a spirit, pure and bright.
All the damp shadow clinging to the ground,
Shook with innumerable tiny bells,
Rung by the grilli. In the distant pools
Frogs trilled and gurgled; every now and then
The plaintive hooting of the owl was heard
Calling her owlets 'mid the cypresses;
Near by, the fountain spilled, and far away
The contadino's watchdog bayed and barked; —
Yet all these sounds were soothed and harmonized
By night's weird hand; and as I listening stood,
Leaning against the columned balustrade,
By aloe vases crowned, my turbulent thoughts
Were calmed — I looked into the sky, and prayed.

The Count not yet returned? Then all is safe.
I took my lamp, and up the marble stairs
My heart jarred to the echoes of my feet;
A swinging shutter down the corridor

So startled me, I nearly dropped the light.
Was I possessed? Almost it seemed to me
As if a spirit wandered in my room.
I could not feel alone there; through my hair
Ran shudders, and a creeping o'er my flesh.
I searched the room, but there was nothing there.
My silk dress as it rustled on the chair
Scared me; the creeping curtain scared me too,
And, daring not to move a hand or foot,
I listened trembling. There was nothing there,
Unless it was a ghost I could not see.
My nerves were all ajar — the buzzing flies
I could not bear; but worse than all, the sense
Of something — some one — there within my room.

My lamp extinguished, into bed I crept,
And hid me 'neath the sheets, and wept such tears,
And prayed such prayers, as desperate creatures pray.

All night the Count returned not to his room;
No step I heard, though long I lay awake.
'T was strange — 't was not his wont. What could it mean?
Troubled and overworn, at last I slept,
Haunted by dreams that ran in dreadful ruts
With weary sameness through my aching brain.

The morning came — the Count was absent still.
Possessed by vague and agitating fears,
I waited almost as one waits for death;
And after torturing hours, that seemed like years
To my strained sense, I heard a step. The door
Turned on its hinges, and there stood the Count:
A cold false smile was on his lips; his look
Was strangely calm — not real. Those hard eyes
Betrayed a purpose that belied the lips —
Belied the courtesy so overstrained.
"I fear you did not look for me," he said;
"Nor have I tidings that can give you joy.
I came a sacred promise to fulfil —
One I could not refuse; and, as you know,
All promises are sacred that I make.
I promised Guido in your hands to place
This, which he took from you, and now returns."
Saying these words, he on the table laid
My ring — the ring that I to Guido gave.

Oh what an awful light was in his eyes!
Oh what a devil's smile was on his lips!
As there he stood, still as a marble man.
My heart stopped beating, numbed by hideous fear —
There was a silence terrible as death:
The terror stunned me, and I could not speak.
Speak! — no, I could not feel. There was no sense
In anything: my very blood was ice.

I could not tell an instant if 't were he,
My husband, standing there — or if 't were I
Who stood before him. Then I reeled and fell —
I did not swoon ; I dropped into my chair
Like one knocked down with an invisible blow.
He moved not ; but an instant after said,
Slowly — his words like to the first great drops
That tell the storm is coming, forced between
His thin white lips — " Your cousin, madam, 's
gone ;
That ring he sent ; he said you 'd understand."

" Oh God ! God ! God ! " I cried, " it is not true !
What do you mean by *gone ?* — speak, speak to
me !
Say 't is a dream — oh, tell me 't is a jest ;
Oh yes, it is a jest, or you 'd not smile."

" Jest ! Do I look, then, like a jesting man ?
Woman, your lover, after your last kiss,
Wiped my dishonor out with his heart's blood.
He knew the wrong he did — saw for us two,
After such scene as that of yesternight
The world was narrow ; so he bravely fell
To expiate the cruel wrong he did."

" Dead ! dead ! oh God ! oh Guido ! — oh my
God ! "
Something like this I shrieked, and moaned and
fell.

Slowly at last, and after hours, returned
My scattered senses; and long days went by —
Eternities of utter reckless woe;
With bursts of agony and burning tears,
And daring hopes that all might be a lie,
Mingled with prayers, half-raving, after death.
I almost looked on God, who sent the sun,
As heartless. Why should flowers and blossoms grow?
Why should all nature look so bright and fair
And birds be singing, and the world be gay,
Except to mock me with its happiness?
Then came as strong revulsions; ne'er before
Knew I what wickedness was in my heart.
In the excited tumult of my brain
I could not see the right — I felt the wrong;
The great black hand of death before my eyes
Darkened my conscience. Oh such savage thoughts
As then roused up and ravaged in the dark!
I could not calm myself to right resolve;
Forgiveness seemed impossible to reach —
Starlike; but vengeance like a devil stood
And offered me its sword, and tempted me,
And would not let me hear the angel's voice;
But still that sweet persistent voice within
Kept calling, till it conquered me at last.
I would forgive and crave forgiveness too.

So governing the wild and cruel thoughts
That growled for vengeance, I awaited him.

At last he came; cold, stern, and dignified,
That mask of honor came into my room.
"Well, sir," I said, "you see me broken, crushed,
Ruined — a helpless, wretched, tortured thing.
If I have been imprudent, heedless, wrong —
For so I was — you are at least avenged:
Your foot has trodden on my erring heart,
As if I were a worm upon your path.
See how it writhes! Oh, sir! are you content?
May God forgive you for your cruel wrong,
And help me in my struggles to forgive."

"Forgiveness! wrong! Your choice of terms is strange.
*I* crave forgiveness? Let that task be yours;
Ask it upon your knees of God and me.
Wrong? There 's no wrong but what belongs to you.
Though I regret what honor made me do,
I did my duty; had you done but yours,
All would be smooth and happy as it was."

"Happy! oh when was happiness for me,
Or when again shall happiness be mine?
Happy? Where 's Guido? Tell me that he lives;
You could not speak of happiness to me,
If you had killed him for a fault of mine.
Say 't was a jest you used to frighten me —

Say this, and I will never see him more.
Oh, I will do my duty with a smile,
Bless you, and crave forgiveness — do your will,
And fetch and carry for you like a dog."

"Your duty! Yes, I think you will indeed;
I shall take heed of that. Not see him more?
For that, too, my security is good, —
I am not used to do my work by halves."

Then the desire of death — my love — his blood —
The pride and cruel calmness of the Count —
The taunting smile with which he looked at me,
Roused all the evil passions I had quelled.
All things will turn when tortured, and I cried,

"Oh, kill me then, too, with the self-same sword!
Oh how I scorn you! let your passion speak!
I loved him — loved him — loved him, do you hear?
Out with your sword if you have any heart!
Kill me in pity, since you 've murdered him."

"Murdered! no, hand to hand and point to point,
With every chance, he fell; he owned his wrong
There lives no man in whom a single spark
Of honor burns, that had not done as I;
I gave him every chance — he lost, and fell."

"I say I loved him better than my life."

"For that I killed him. He will love no more."

"He loves me still, — above as I below.
Oh, I am his, he mine, beyond your power —
You do but part us for a little space;
And in the future, after life is o'er,
My soul shall rush to clasp him closer there,
Than could my human arms when here on earth."

"Ginevra! do you heed the words you use?
You dared not more than let him speak of love?
Silent? You leave me then to think the worst."

"Think what you choose — do what you choose — I loathe
Alike your foul thoughts and your cruel act."

"Then my name 's blasted and my honor stained,
And I have blazoned it to all the world."

"Your name, your honor stained! Ay, so it is!
But not by me, not by my guiltless love —
Guiltless, though fatal. Not a thought for mine
Held back your hand. Blindly, through Guido's life,
My honor too you struck at, blazoning
To the wide world that ours was guilty love."

"I would to God that none of this had been!"

"Nor had it ever been, except for you.
You bound the life of Guido unto mine;
You brought him here, you tempted both of us,
And now affect surprise to find we loved.
Careless of others, centred in yourself,
You could not claim a love you never gave.
What debt beyond allegiance did I owe?"

"What have you ever asked that was not given?
My wealth, my name, my rank, my house, were yours,
And in return you stain my ancient name,
For all the world to point its finger at.
A husband's duty I at least have done —
And honestly, I think. Have you a wife's?"

"I have done all I could. Oh, pity me,
And do not urge a desperate creature on.
Think what I suffer. Pity and forgive.
I own my fault — I ask you to forgive.
I was not all to blame; you, too, must bear
A portion of the wrong — at least be just."

"What was my fault? — what portion of the wrong?
Be just, you say. Of course I shall be just."

"For this, at least, you were to blame: you swore

To love, to honor, and to cherish me
For all my life. How did you keep your oath?
You left me all defenceless to be prey
To solitude, to idleness, to chance.
What have I asked, you say, that was not given?
Love, love — 't was that I craved; not title, wealth,
Or name, but daily acts of tenderness.
God knows how long I strove, how earnestly,
To patch with duty the great gap of love.
It would not do; my nature yearned for more.
Well! give a starving wretch upon a wreck
A golden florin when he cries for bread!
Will it suffice? No; 't is mere mockery.
And so were all your vaunted gifts — no flower
In the chill ruin of my hopes you left;
By heartless duties, dull routine, you froze
My eager nature; — sudden, like the breath
Of southern spring, with all its roses in it,
Love breathed across me — all my life broke up
Like some great river's ice at touch of spring,
And I was borne in one great burst away."

"Fine phrases — pretty pictures — nothing more!
And did no thought of honor hold you back?"

"Honor! ah, honor! wretched mud-built dam!
Could that avail to stem the swollen stream?
Acts, yes — but nothing else. If I was stunned,

Aghast, to feel the formless dreams of love
Take passion's tyrannous and threatening shape,
What help was there Oh no, you cannot see!
As well the stagnant pool, all creamed with green,
Sees why the torrent, shaking its white spray,
And mad with all the tumult of its course,
Can pause not on the brink of the abyss.
Who put temptation in my very path?
You — you who should have held me — dragged me down.
What right had you to leave me to such chance?"

"It was a fault, I see — it was a fault.
But who could think you such a worthless thing
As take the first fair apple Satan gave?
Curse, curse the hour, O woman, when you did!
His blood is on your hands, and not on mine;
Wipe it away, then, if you can, with words.
You knew the path you trod led straight to death.
You ventured all — your fame — my name — his life —
For what? — to satisfy a moment's whim.
You, like a child that sees a pretty flower
That 's caught a holding down a precipice,
Dared everything to wear it on your breast.
Your foot slipped — why, of course, of course it slipped,
Weak woman-brain — and down to death you went.

Go, wet his grave now with your idle tears;
Will they bring back the life you sacrificed?"

"Oh, had you loved me this had never been!
I sought a flower? I sought it for a whim? —
Ah, no! Love tempted with a ripe, rare fruit
A starving creature, who refused the gift,
And laid her down to die for honor's sake.
I did refuse it — yes, you know I did.
Nay, look not on me with that devil's smile;
It makes me almost hate you. Not alone
'T is love you lack, but pity, but remorse,
But conscience! Never shall that hand again,
Stained by his blood, touch mine — 't is widowed now.
Nay, play not with your poniard, — out with it!
Strike! there 's no thing that wants its death so much.
Strike! here I stand. Strike as you struck at him!
Strike, soul of honor! Ah! you calculate —
Your cold blood cannot stir. I see your eyes —
They are arranging. No, it will not do
To trust an impulse — you must think it out.
Oh, be a man for once, and dare to strike!"

I know I touched him — touched him to the quick;
I saw it in the twitching of his hands:
Yet there he stood, with his contemptuous smile

That maddened every feeling. All at once
A sudden cord within my brain gave way;
The pulse's hammers in my temples beat.
The last thing that I saw was his black eyes —
I see them still; then with a cymbal's clash
The sunlight shattered to a myriad sparks;
And what became of me, God only knows.

When to my senses I again returned,
I felt myself borne rapidly along
In a horse-litter. To my brain confused
All the last scene came back again to me;
For every word had burned into my soul,
But not as aught that really had been,
Only an ugly, wild, and hideous dream;
And mixed with it a thousand horrid thoughts,
That seemed as real as the actual were.

I tore the curtains open, and looked out;
I asked no question — for, had I been dead,
I had not cared less what they did with me;
Life had gone by — 't was just the same as death
When on the floor I fainted. Now I woke
Into a kind of life that was not mine:
The night itself was weird, like all my thoughts;
Strange clouds piled wildly all along the sky,
And, hurrying to and fro, shut out its light.
The earth was swallowed up in heavy dark;
Low thunder growled; at sudden fits the sky
Winked with white lightnings 'neath the black
low brows

Of clouds along the horizon, and glared out
Across the world, and showed the trembling trees
Ghastly against it; then the black again
Swallowed the world up, and I heard great drops
Beat on the leaves. From one low threatening
cloud,
That rose to meet us, leaped out suddenly
A crinkled snake of fire, then darted in;
And thunder trampled with tumultuous roar:
Or was it rather that the angel flashed
His sword of jagged fire that drove me out
From Paradise, and God's dread voice I heard
Behind the cloud to threaten my lost soul?
All worn and weak, and shattered in my nerves,
I could not bear the sight; and back I fell,
Only half-conscious; and I seemed to feel
The horse's hoofs keep beating on my brain;
And now and then a startling thunder-peal.
All sense of time was gone. At last I slept,
Or swooned — for all things faded into blank.

What happened afterwards I do not know:
What first I saw, when any sense came back,
Were these four walls, and my old Rosa's face
Looking on mine with pity as she bent
Above my pillow, and I heard her say,
"O blessed Virgin! — see, she wakes at last!"

From that day forward, now for ten long years,
Here is my prison; here the sad sun shines,

But never shines for me a loving smile.
His face, that would have made the dreariest spot
A paradise, has gone beyond the world;
And he that spared my life and crushed my heart
Since that last day has never looked on me.
This is his vengeance — he has hid me here,
Beyond all hope of change, to waste away,
Unloved, uncared for, like an outcast thing,
To suck the fever's pestilential air,
And see the sad Maremma's lonely waste,
And hear the beating of the restless sea;
While in its marsh of drear monotony,
Life breeds its poison-thoughts, and wastes, and rots.

Ah death! death! death! how have I prayed for you!
You take the happy, fold them in your arms,
And kiss them to the slumber of the blest;
But from my path in scorn you turn aside.

Oh! think what years they 've buried me alive
In this drear villa all alone, alone;
Long days alone — long, long black nights alone;
And I was never over-brave, you know.
Imprisoned with the recollected past,
Without a future, weak with illness too,
I grew to fear my very self (what more
Is there on earth to fear?). My eyes looked strange

In these blear mirrors. Through the noiseless
night
Often I lay and shuddered in the blank
Dead waste of darkness, while my great square
room
Seemed like a shadowy tomb to shut me in;
And all the darkness weighed on me like death.
Then, straining out into the empty void,
My eyes made globes of pale electric fire,
That swelled and faded into globes of black,
And hours I used to watch them come and go.
Nor was it better, when the sad-faced moon
Mocked at me in its far-off silentness.
Daylight at times was worse: the blazing sun
Flashed on the sea that shook its burning plates,
And through the shutters' slightest chink peered
in
To crawl and quiver on the ceiling there.
Hide as I would, I felt the fierce white noon
Seethe round the house and eat into my room,
In busy silence prying to and fro
As if in search of me. All was so still,
Despite the shrill cicale's saw without,
And maddening burring buzz of flies within.
Even the melancholy wash of waves
Broke not the silence — nor the voiceful pines,
That always whispered though the breezes slept.
Only my echoing feet in the great hall,
As to and fro I paced, broke the dead calm.
And thus the dreary, weary days passed by —

No duty to be done, no life to live;
For surely what I lived was never life.

Was it, then, strange I lost my head at last?
But that is over now, and passed away;
'T is only when the fever comes, my thoughts
Dance to discordant music. Then at times
They seem to gather to a single point,
And, widening, whirl and whirl with buzz and din
Till all the world swarms like a spinning mass,
And down, down, down, as in a maelstrom's cone,
My spirit, worn with struggle, madly goes,
Like a lost ship, and all becomes a blank.
Thus, helpless, down the vortex borne I reel,
Until, the fever gone, a wretched wreck
Flung out I find me on the shores of life.
Ah! dearest, Joy unto the spirit is
What light is to the flowers — no color else,
Joy is the voice of Good — the voice of God;
And when my heart was barren of all joy,
It sicklied like a plant deprived of light.

I have been mad — who would not have been mad? —
And hideous visions have obscured my soul.
Long time some dreadful thing I had to hide —
Some vague and dreadful thing, without a name.
Here in the walls it lived and peeped at me;
Long lonely nights kept whispering at my blinds,

Leaped out of flowers when I had gathered them,
And placed them on my bosom ; with its laugh
Scared the still noon, and would not let me rest.

That went at last, though sometimes it returns ;
And though I know 't is all a hideous dream,
Yet through my tangled thoughts so long it trod,
It wore a track there that will never go.
And for a moment often it returns,
And I seem mad because I speak of it ;
But do not think I 'm mad, or not more mad
Than any human creature kept so long
In this wild place alone, and with such things.

When all is dark, on dismal gusty nights,
Ghosts wander all around this lonely house,
And smothered groans and stifled shrieks I hear,
That mingle with the beating of the sea.
Sometimes the giant rafters creak and strain,
And overhead there rush tumultuous feet, —
Or slow and heavy steps, with clank of spurs,
Stride nearer, nearer up the sounding stairs,
Till, wild with fear, I see the shaking door
Swing open slowly on its creaking hinge,
To let some ghastly unseen horror in.
But most I dread to pass that banquet-hall,
Where rotting cobwebs flaunt their dusky flags
From its black beams — or up the chimney suck,
When through its sooty throat the tempest roars ;
For then fierce spirits seem to hold carouse,

And with their hideous revelry and laugh
Jar the loose windows; and the shields and swords
Clang on the walls as if they longed for blood.
All this, you 'll say, is fancy. Live here, then,
Through the drear winter all alone, alone,
With these wild terrors grasping after you.
O God! we were not made to live alone —
We all go mad if we are left alone.

My child, too. Ah, my little Angelo!
Where are you now? — Oh, tell me where he is!
That little rosy face that hid itself
Around my neck with both hands clasping it.
Oh, such long years since I have felt those hands!
How cruel, cruel, from my arms to tear
The only thing he gave me that I loved!
How many nights I 've dreamed that he was here;
How many mornings waked, and wept, and wailed
To find me here alone — more desolate
For the sweet dream that came and went at will
He has grown up to boyhood now, I know.
He has forgotten me — my name 's a word
Banned to his lips — he knows not that I live;
Yet in my memory how alive he is,
A baby blessing — with those four white teeth
Gleaming beneath the little sudden smile,

The dimpled elbows and the rosy feet
Never at rest — the unformed chirping words
Like a bird's language — all the many ways
With which he crept into my very heart.
Oh! 't was a cruel act, a wicked act,
To tear him from me. How has he grown up
Without a mother's love? Oh, justice, Count! —
Your justice — did it soothe his little cries?
He has your name, but not, I pray, your heart.
One drop of love is worth a well of pride.

Why should I cling to life? A hundred times
I 've pressed this dagger to my throbbing heart —
A hundred times I have not dared to strike;
And yet how blest a thing were death to me!

I think at last my time is drawing near.
Ah, heaven! I hope 't is drawing near at last,
I have so suffered. Even he would strike
That sword of his in justice to my heart —
He would relent, I think — I hope he would —
Could he but see me now; even he to whom
Mercy is slow to whisper would forgive.
Justice so strained is vengeance, nothing more —
All has so changed, and I was wrong, I know.
Yet no! What do I say? — he, he forgive?
Never! They only can forgive who love.
He knows not pity for an erring heart.
Justice and honor: — these two are his gods;
To them alone his sacrifice is given.

Why do I rail at him? Do I forgive?
Am I so free from blot? Was I all right?
Ah, no! we both were wrong, we all were wrong!
In these long days reviewing all the past
I know and feel how very wrong we were.
I plainly see (the passion cleared away)
No fit excuse for Guido and for me.
Tempted we were beyond our human power;
But after marriage-vows, if love come in,
Its torture we must own and bear — like death.
My punishment is just — his too, perhaps;
But man is not to blame as woman is.
Mine was the greater fault: I led him on,
He loved me so; and he was all alone.

I should have checked his love when it began;
I should have bade him go, and turned my thoughts
To household duties; but I played with fire,
And mine the fault that both were sacrificed.
The Count was not so wrong as then he seemed;
And from his view his deed was justified.
And he has suffered too — and I forgive —
Yes, as I need forgiveness, I forgive.
And so I pray for all, even for the Count;
And, looking forward, fix my eyes above,
To meet my Guido when this life is past.

What matters it? — a few short years, or months,
Or weeks, perhaps — or even a few more days —

And I shall be with him, where love 's no crime,
And God, who sees the heart, will pity me.
Oh, yes ! God's law is tenderer than man's.
He is not only just — but pity too,
And love, unbounded love, He has for all ;
And He will make all smooth and right at last.
So let me weep upon your breast, dear friend —
My only solace for these long, long years.
God will remember you for this — His arm
Is long — His memory will never fail ;
And He will make all smooth and right at last.

## RADICOFANI.

"Quivi era l'Aretin che dalle braccie
Fiere di Ghin di Tacco ebbe la morte."

I.

This is a barren, desolate scene,
Grim and gray, with scarce a tree,
Gashed with many a wild ravine
Far away as the eye can see;
Ne'er a home for miles to be found,
Save where huddled on some grim peak
A village clinging in fear looks round
Over the country vast and bleak,
As if it had fled from the lower ground,
Refuge from horrors there to seek.

II.

Over the spare and furzy soil
With never a waving grain-field sowed,
Raggedly winds with weary toil
The shining band of dusty road, —
Down through the river's rocky bed,
That is white and dry with summer's drought,
Or climbing some sandy hillock's head,
Over and under, in and out,

Like a struggling thing by madness led,
That wanders along in fear and doubt.

III.

What are those spots on yon sandy slope
Where the green is frayed and tattered with gray?
Are they only rocks — or sheep that crop
The meagre pasture? — one scarce can say.
This seems not a place for flowers — but behold!
How the lupine spreads its pink around,
And the clustered ginesta squanders its gold
As if it loved this barren ground;
And surely that bird is over-bold
That dares to sing o'er that grave-like mound.

IV.

It is dead and still in the middle noon;
The sand-beds shine with a blinding light,
The cicali dizzen the air with their tune,
And the sunshine seems like a curse to smite;
The mountains around their shoulders bare
Gather a thin and shadowy veil,
And shrink from the fierce and scorching glare —
And close to the grass so withered and pale
Hovering quivers the glassy air,
And the lizards pant in their emerald mail.

V.

Think of this place in the dreary gloom
Of an autumn twilight, when the sun

Hiding in banks of clouds goes down,
And silence and shadow are coming on ; —
White mists crawl — one lurid light
Glares from the west through a broken cloud —
Rack hurries above — the dubious night
Is creeping along with its spectral crowd ;
Would it, I ask, be a startling sight
To meet a ghost here in a shroud ?

VI.

One of the thousand murdered men
Who have stained the blasted soil with blood ?
Does the lupine get its color then
From some victim pashed to death in the mud ?
Has the yellow ginesta the hue of the gold
From the traveller here in terror torn ?
Was yon bird but a sprite, singing so bold,
That in life a maiden's form had worn,
And at night steals back in its shape of old
To haunt the darkness pale and forlorn ?

VII.

Look at that castle whose ruins crown
The rocky crest of yonder height,
Still frowning over the squalid town,
That cowers beneath as if in affright.
From his eyrie there to glut his beak
The robber swooped to his shuddering prey,
And the ghosts of the past still haunt the peak
Though robber and baron have passed away.

And, hark! was that the owl's long shriek,
Or a ghost's that flits through the ruins gray?

VIII.

'T is blood and gold wherever I gaze,
And tangled brambles, stiff and gray, —
A scowling, ugly, terrified place,
A spot for murder and deadly fray.
On such a barren, desolate heath,
When shadows were deepening all around,
The sisters weird before Macbeth
Rising, hovered along the ground,
And echoed his inward thought of death,
And vanished again behind a mound.

IX.

Such were the thoughts that filled my breast,
Wandering here one lonely night,
When sudden behind a rock's dark crest
Uprose a shape of portentous height.
A coal-black plume from his helmet flowed,
His eyes in the visor's shadow gleamed,
And here and there a steel-flash showed
An outline vague and dim that seemed
To hover along the dusky road
Like a thing that is neither real nor dreamed.

X.

In his hand he bore a mighty spear,
Tall as a pine and stained with blood.

Transfixed in horror and ghastly fear,
With knocking knees I before him stood.
"Who and what art thou?" I cried,
"Monstrous figure, of noiseless tread,
That out of the darkness thus dost stride?"
The black plume shook on the lofty head —
A hollow voice from the helm replied —
Hollow and vague like the voice of the dead.

XI.

"Ghino di Tacco was my name!
I come to answer your sneering thought!
Start not! Listen before you blame!
The fool condemns what he knoweth not.
Call me robber or call me knight,
But listen to me while my tale I tell.
I struck, the oppressed and weak to right:
My blows on the strong and cruel fell.
For vengeance I struck! If my hand was light
Ask Benincasa — down in hell.

XII.

"On the slopes of Arbia's banks arose
The little castle that gave me birth,
When my father's strongest, bitterest foes —
The Santafiori — cursed the earth.
Him they hated, for he was brave;
Him they hunted, for he was good.
The bandit was strong the weak to save,
The blows of his heavy sword were rude;

But treason dug for him his grave,
And the Santafiori bought his blood.

XIII.

" Ah that wild and terrible night ! "
Here the spectre his great spear raised ;
And his coal-like eyes, with angry light,
Like a furnace roused by the blast, out-blazed.
" Screams of women, and groans and sighs,
Clashing of steel, a swirl of flame,
Mixed with a tumult of savage cries,
Woke me. I shouted my father's name :
When sudden, before my terrified eyes,
Through the smoke a pale shape swiftly came.

XIV.

" 'T was my mother. She seized me in her arms,
And forth she rushed in the stormy night.
Her strained eyes glared so in wild alarm,
They scared me. I uttered a shriek of fright.
'Silence, my child, for your life ! ' she said.
Then swift we stole down the hillside bare,
And up again through the dark wood fled ;
While the sky was lit by a lurid glare,
And the great trees, roaring overhead,
Hurtled and heaved in the bleak night air.

XV.

" To yonder castle that frowns above,
By many a devious path we went ;

And nurtured there with pious love
My growing days as a boy were spent.
Night by night, when tolled for the dead
The great tower-bell, at its solemn call,
My mother, in black, with a mournful tread,
And with her a lady, dark and tall,
My childish fearful footsteps led
To a shrine built into the tower's thick wall.

XVI.

"Before a crucifix there a light
Burnt dim and sad in the gloomy shade.
And oft, in the solemn silent night,
Weeping, they kneeled with me and prayed.
One night the lady came alone.
'Where is my mother?' in fear, I cried.
Then, with a kiss and a broken tone,
'Poor child!' the lady in black replied.
And I knew by her voice my mother was gone,
And my heart grew still as it had died.

XVII.

"Years went on. My wondering heart
Strove through the shadowy veil to pierce.
I wandered many an hour apart,
And my boyish spirit grew dark and fierce.
'Whose,' I cried, 'is that heavy spear,
And that blood-stained shirt against the wall?'
'Your father's,' she said. 'Why hang they
there?'

'Ask me not now — 't would your heart appal!
When you are able that spear to bear,
Vengeance is yours — you shall then know all.'

XVIII.

" 'Vengeance is yours;' — day after day
These words in secret I brooded o'er.
They cast their shade on my boyish play,
Through my dreams a painful path they wore.
I longed for manhood. Within me grew
A craving desire the key to gain
To this terrible mystery. Muscle and thew
I strove to strengthen with might and main;
For my father's spear was heavy, I knew,
And my boyish attempts to wield it vain.

XIX.

" Panting, I hacked at the mountain oak,
Till it fell with a heavy crash and groan;
The gnashing wild-boar felt my stroke —
By his heels I dragged him home alone;
Daily at tilt and sword I tried
My growing strength. I laughed at fear.
Danger to me was as a bride,
The sound of whose voice I leaped to hear.
Till at last, with a thrill of manhood's pride,
I brandished aloft my father's spear.

XX.

" Fiercely I cried, as its weight I shook,
'Read me the riddle — these arms are strong —

Longer delay I will not brook ;
This heart is bold — it has waited long.'
That night I started in wild surprise ;
For a voice cried out, in my dreaming ear,
' Son of a murdered man, arise !
The hour is come ! ' ' Behold me here ! '
I answered ; — and there, before my eyes,
Was the form of the lady standing near.

XXI.

" Sternly she took me by the hand,
And straight to the chapel my steps she led.
I saw the spear by the altar stand ;
The bloody shirt was across it spread.
The open Evangel before me stood.
' There,' as she grasped my arm, she cried,
' Are the last red drops of your father's blood,
When under the headsman's axe he died.
For know that he fell not in battle or feud,
As a soldier falls, at his comrade's side.

XXII.

" ' Vainly he fought in that fearful fray
When his castle was stormed ; but a faithful few
Bore him, senseless and wounded, away, —
And a bandit's life thenceforth he knew.
From lair to lair, o'er the mountains steep,
Like a wounded lion, they tracked his way.
His sword drank blood ; — but in his sleep
The Santafiori seized their prey.

They dared not kill; but their plot was deep,—
And a base judge gave him to death for pay.

XXIII.

"'Ere on the scaffold fell his head,
He called a vassal, and said, "This spear,
And the shirt my murdered blood makes red,
Are the heritage of Ghino dear.
When he can bear and wield it well,
Tell him the tale of his father's death;
How he shall use it his heart will tell.
I bless him now with my latest breath.
Say to his mother——" His voice here fell—
Your mother is sleeping this stone beneath.

XXIV.

"'Struck, as by death, when she heard his fate
She fell, for her strength with her hope had fled.
On her grave you stand. I, forced to wait,
Tell you for her the words of the dead.
See! the Evangel is under your hand!
Swear to revenge your father's fame!
Burn on your heart, as with a brand,
Benincasa's accursed name!
Seek him in Rome — where the plot was planned
That doomed your father to death and shame!

XXV.

"'Bind that bloody shirt to your heart!
Lift the spear! The bell strikes one —

The gates are open — at once depart,
And never return till your duty 's done.
This is no longer a home for you —
You look like your father standing there, —
If in your veins his blood runs true
You know what there is to do and dare.
Go ! if this story thrill you through,
Swear to revenge your father. Swear !

XXVI.

" ' Go ! When that villain's head you bring,
Bridge shall fall, and portcullis rise,
And the bells of Radicofani ring ;
But never till then dare meet these eyes.'
The light burned dim as thus she spoke ;
I grasped the spear with a thrill of rage ;
I struck my clenched hand on the book
And swore my oath on its holy page,
Never again on the place to look
Till his blood my vengeance should assuage.

XXVII.

" The grinding bridge with a clang went down,
The tempest roared — the lightning flashed —
The wind through the great gate sucked with a groan
As my horse's hoofs on its pavement dashed.
Four hundred horsemen were at my side —
One word, and their swift swords left the sheath,
And crossed with a clash. Vengeance ! they cried —

To Rome! Then over the sandy heath
Closely we galloped, a long fierce ride
To Rome, with the settled purpose of death.

XXVIII.

"Alone at the Campidoglio's base
I stood. The hated shape was there;
The Senator's foul and ugly face,
That brought my father to his despair;
The cursed, livid, hideous head,
With flabby mouth, and streamy eyes —
He heard in the hall my clanging tread.
He looked with a leer of cold surprise,
And 'What do you seek of me?' he said.
'A debt!' I answered, 'a bloody prize!'

XXIX.

"He started and trembled in ghastly fright,
For a terrible memory on him smote, —
My father I seemed to his bleary sight.
'Villain,' I said, as I grasped his throat,
'Go down to hell in your despair!'
A strangled gasp from his lips there came,
'Save me! oh God!' — 'Go! Judas, bear
To God your deeds of crime and shame!
Turrino di Tacco is waiting there!
The mercy you meted to him — reclaim!'

XXX.

"I plunged my dagger into his heart, —
His head from his bleeding trunk I hewed, —

His vassals terrified stood apart
As I strode through the gathering multitude, —
I stuck that head on my father's spear.
'Room!' I cried, as my sword I drew;
'He meets the fate of this villain here
Who hinders my path!' They saw and knew
Death in my eyes. They left me clear
My path, and I strode in safety through.

XXXI.

"Swift to the castle's bridge I sped.
'Down with the drawbridge, men of mine!'
High up I lifted the ghastly head.
'Down with the bridge! You know the sign.'
Clang went the chains with a clattering din.
The castle's lady I found in prayer
At the lonely shrine as I entered in.
She lifted her eyes. 'You, Ghino! where
Is the traitor's head?' 'He died in his sin;'
And I flung the head on the pavement there.

XXXII.

"Then through Siena rose a cry,
But the Santafiori strove in vain;
From the eyrie of Radicofani
I swooped and swept them from hill and plain;
Their castles I burned, their lands laid waste.
Refuge they sought in the city's wall,
The cup they had proffered was theirs to taste;
I saw my foes before me fall,
But a price on my bandit head was placed.

XXXIII.

"Yet never, a bandit though I was,
Was my sword disgraced by useless crime;
With the weak and poor I made my cause,
And my deeds were sung in many a rhyme.
At my table the beggar found a feast,
Though the cruel baron felt my sword;
I sheared the ambitious worldly priest,
But the ruined peasant his farm restored;
Cursed by the proud — by the humble blessed —
I broke no promise in act or word.

XXXIV.

"There rots my castle on yonder height! —
Mortal! this promise of you I claim,
Tell the story I tell to-night
Whenever you mention Di Tacco's name."
"I promise," I cried. The figure bowed
His lofty stature and clinched his spear,
And slow, like the mist of a fading cloud,
In the shadow I watched it disappear.
And my heart in my bosom beat aloud
With a feeling of mystery, doubt, and fear.

## GIANNONE.

DEDICATED TO E. S.

Take a cigar — draw up your chair,
There 's at least a good half-hour to spare
Before the Capuchin clock strikes one,
And the bell, with a sharp spasmodic tinkle,
Rouses the Frati to shuffle to prayer,
And the altar candles begin to twinkle
In the cheerless chapel, bleak and bare —
By Jove! we are better off here than there.
And now, as that *friend* of yours has gone,
There 's a word I must whisper to you, alone.

Friends grow dearer, and hearts draw nearer,
Calmed in the silent centre of night;
And words we may say, that the full mid-day,
If it should hear us, would jeer outright.
Day, with its din, for distrust and doubt!
Night for confidence, friendship, love!
The day's work done, and the world shut out,
The streets all silent, the stars above,
Pleasant it is to gather about
The fire of wood, and muse and dream,
And talk of the hopes and joys of youth,
And open our hearts and confess the truth,
Ceasing to make-believe and seem.

Fling another log on the fire,
Another log from the Sabine hill,
And a heap of those rusty crackling canes
That out on the sunny Campagna plains
Held on their trellis the grape-hung vine,
Whose blood was drained for this purple wine,
Our straw-enwoven fiasco to fill.
Look! the old tendrils, stiff as wire,
Cling to them still with their strong desire,
Outlasting death — as our friendship will.

How the flame bickers, and quivers, and flickers,
Darting its eager tongues about!
Then blazes abroad with genial flashes,
Till the sap comes singing and bubbling out.
Wild as a Mœnad with myriad fancies,
Hither and thither it leaps and dances,
Fitful, whimsical, glad, and free,
Like a living thing with a heart and soul.
Oh, the wood-fire is the fire for me!
Away with your heartless mechanical coal,
Your vulgar drudge, so sullen and slow,
That ne'er with a flame of fancy flashes,
But burns with a grim and business glow,
And crumbles away to dirty ashes,
And smells of the furnace and factory.
Talk of the home and hearth! of late
Nothing we 've had but house and grate —
Nothing in England to warm to the core,
Like the vast old chimneys and fires of yore,
When the great logs blazed with a genial roar.

Hark to that mossy log, whose heart
The contadino has cloven apart,
Singing its death-song! How it tells
What the cicadæ chirped in the dells,
When it was young, and its leafy pride
Shadowed Pan with its branches wide;
And what old Auster, bluff and bold,
Screamed in its ear while it shivered with cold.
Thousands of idyls it has to sing,
Of love and summer, of youth and spring;
Of the Dryad that slipt with her rustling dress
Into its murmurous leafiness;
Of the rout of Bacchanals, ivy-crowned,
Shaking the air with the cymbal's sound,
While the yawning panther's velvet foot
Pressed the rank grasses over its root; —
Of the timorous Naiad, pearled with dew,
That fled to the bubbling torrent near,
And, hid by the bushes, looked trembling through
At the smooth-limbed Bacchus, in love and fear;
Of the chance and change of the season's spell,
Of musical birds and odorous flowers,
Of the storm that swept like a chorded shell
The groaning forest — of whispering showers,
Of all that, rooted there, it beheld,
Since first in its veins the young sap swelled.
But what like this has your coal to tell?
Black old mummy; what has it known,
Since the earth was a bubbling lava-vat,
Sunk in its dreary silent tomb,

But the earthquake's rumbling sound of doom,
Till it leapt to light with a split and groan,
With a toad, perhaps, encased in its stone —
How can you warm your heart at that?

How the wood blazes! Fill my glass!
This Lacryma Christi goes to the heart,
And makes the olden memories start,
Like an April rain on last year's grass.
How the days go! how the hours pass!
Sometimes like a thousand years it seems,
And then like a little month of dreams,
Since the Odes of Horace you taught me to scan,
And helped me over Homeric crevasses,
I, stumbling along where you lightly ran,
By the shores of the Poluphloisboio Thalasses —
Then how I longed to be a man,
Though thrilling with all a boy's joy of the lasses,
With my crown just even with your shoulder,
Looking with reverence up to you —
Longing to know the things you knew,
You six feet high and ten years older,
And leaping over with quiet ease
What brought me staggering on to my knees.
Then I remember you went to Rome,
And on the hem of your garment brought
Odors back to our quiet home,
That ravished with sweetness my boyish thought.
How your talk, like an o'erbrimmed cup,
Ran over with beauty, my heart drank up; —

Oranges, olives — tinkling guitars,
Skies all throbbing with palpitant stars,
Moonlighted terraces, gardens, and groves,
Bubbling of nightingales, cooing of doves —
Portia's, Laura's, and Juliet's loves, —
Everything lovely I seemed to see
When you were talking of Italy;
There you almost seemed to have met
Titian, Raffaelle, Tintoret,
And felt the grasp of Angelo's hand,
And known Da Vinci, so calm and grand,
And walked in that glorious company,
Whose starry names are above us seen
Like constellations in the sky;
And you in that marble world had been,
Where the Grecian and Roman gods still reign,
And lord it in Art's serene domain;
And behind the veil of talk you wove,
Their figures, half-hidden, seemed to move,
And, beckoning, smile — to pass away
At a single touch of my everyday.

Ah! the old dreams — old times — old joys —
Buried beyond the Present's noise,
How still they sleep beneath time's river!
All of their sorrows and pains forgot,
All of their beauty, without a blot,
Living to perfume the memory forever.
Well! once you filled my heart with wine,
That made me drunk with a life divine;

And I pour into yours, as a recompense,
Small beer of advice and common sense.
You were a poet to me at home,
I 'll be a preacher to you in Rome.

So, to come out of this dreamy land,
To the business matter of fact in hand;
You know that fellow that just went out —
But pray, do you know his business here? —
How he is living — what he 's about,
Here in Rome this many a year?
Somebody introduced him? He seems
A sort of a pious good-natured fool, —
A convert, they told you, with dreams and schemes
For the Church's universal rule?
All very well; but what are his means?
Faith is lovely, but is not food; —
The heart has its pulse, but the stomach needs beans,
And texts don't do when the appetite 's rude.
Man 's but a poor weak creature at best,
Till the fiend in the belly is lulled to rest.
Throw *him* his dose, and the road is free
For meditation and sanctity.
Now look me, my old friend, straight in the eye —
Unless appearances grossly lie
(I 'm as sorry to say it as you to hear,
But after midnight one must be sincere),

That fellow 's only a Government Spy!
Of course you 're surprised — There 's nothing on earth
So base in your eyes as a Government Spy;
He 's half an Englishman, too, by birth,
So the thing is an impossibility.
Be calm, my friend, that 's the way it looks
To us poor sinners; but we mistake:
The law is different in his books; —
He acts for the Holy Church's sake;
And there 's nothing so dirty you may not do,
With absolution and blessing too —
Not to speak of the money part —
If the Church's good you have at heart.
Holy fictions are never lies;
'T is the pious purpose purifies.
And pray distinguish, if you please,
Those who, like martyrs, sacrifice
Instincts of commonest decencies,
Seeking to win an immortal prize
From merely common vulgar spies.
Spirito Santo 's not the same
As Aqua Vitæ, even in name.
Spirito Santo mumbles and prays
The while his friend to death he betrays;
Aqua Vitæ is bought and sold,
And frankly admits that he works for gold.
For, "Bah!" he says, "a man must live,
And holes there are in every one's sieve.
Nobody 's pure as he pretends,

And we all eat dirt for our selfish ends.
Pride is the ruin of angel and man;
All of us do as well as we can;
You at my dirty business scoff,
But silver spoons are found in the trough.
Cheaper than you I am, I 'll admit,
Because I am poorer, not worse a whit.
A beggar's sole chance is to sleep in a ditch;
I 'd be respectable too — were I rich;
But calling names don't break any bones,
And eggs are eggs, though you call them stones."

Talk as vulgar as this your friend
Is ready as you to reprehend:
For, "Ah!" he says, "we cannot refuse
Our crosses and burdens, though hard to bear:
The world 's always ready to sneer and abuse,
But we must answer their scoffs with a prayer:
Our duty is not for us to choose.
Fallible reason to man is given;
The Church alone has the keys to heaven;
She only knows what is purest and best,
And her servants humbly must do her behest.
She doeth a mighty good with a fool,
And, using me as a worthless tool,
If I mistake, and stumble, and fall,
She shall give absolution for all."

Now I may be deceived, and I hope I am:
But a wolf may borrow the fleece of a lamb,

And I fear your friend is that kind of sham.
But listen, I 'll spin a yarn for you,
And every thread of it 's simply true ;
And then you can come to your own decision,
If I 'm right or wrong in my suspicion.

'T is years, as you know, that I 've lived in Rome,
Till now it 's familiar to me as home ;
And 't is years ago I knew Giannone,
A capital fellow, with great black eyes,
And a pleasant smile of frank surprise,
And as gentle a pace as a lady's pony,
Ready to follow wherever you bid ;
His oaths were, " Per Bacco ! " and " Dio mio ! "
And " Guardi ! " he cried to whatever you said ;
Though not overfreighted with esprit or *brio*,
His heart was better by far than his head.
His education was rather scanty ;
But what on earth could he have done
With an education, having one,
Unless he chose for the scarlet to run,
And study the Fathers and lives of the Santi ?
Nevertheless, I know he had read,
Because he quoted them, Tasso and Dante ;
And so often he recommended the prosy
Promessi Sposi, I must suppose he
Had also achieved that tale of Manzoni ;
And besides Monte Christo and Uncle Tom,
And the history of Italy and Rome,

(For he thoroughly knew how Liberty's foot
Had been pinched, and maimed, and lamed in
her boot),
He had studied with zeal the book of the Mass,
And Libretti of all the operas.

This little learning sufficed for Giannone,
And, sooth to say, as little money;
Most of the latter he spent upon dress,
And his life was neither more nor less
Than the difficult problem, day by day,
To drive the cursèd time away.
So having nothing himself to do,
He would dawdle away your morning for you.
When you were silent to drive him away,
You missed your man — he would stay and stay,
With the same old phrases, the livelong day.
And smiling at nothing, and so content
He lounged at his ease on your sofa there,
Or peeped in your boxes without your consent,
Or paced through the room, or, pausing, stood
At the glass, and examined himself with care,
And arranged his cravat, or moustache, or hair.
And so pleased if you threw him a word or two,
That you had no heart to be downright rude,
And say, "My dear fellow, you really intrude;"
Or if at last you were ready to swear,
And cried, "I am busy; I've something to do!"
Dull as a stone to what you meant, he
Would quietly settle himself in his chair,

And smiling answer, with fatuous air,
" Faccia, senza complimenti."

His room was an armory of swords —
Some blades scribbled with Koran words,
Some long and thin, some short and stout,
Some crooked, some straight, some curved about.
He had ancient guns and pistols too,
One-barrelled, six-barrelled, old and new,
With every species of bore and stock,
And every imaginable lock ;
Daggers, with hilts by Cellini made,
Or so at least Giannone said ;
A savage bludgeon from Southern Seas,
A Turkish scimitar's gilded blade,
An Indian tomahawk and a creese ; —
Everything murderous, terrible, wild,
Pleased this creature, so gentle and mild.
On his wall was a head of Rachel, of course,
Flanked by two dogs, a stag, and a horse
From Landseer's brush, and, poised on her neat toe,
The delicate sylph-like shape of Cerito.
On his hearth-rug lay a lion's skin,
And a couple of dogs made a terrible din,
Yelping and screaming at all that came in.
And here he lay, in his warlike den,
And made his breakfast on " cafè au lait,"
The very idlest of idle men,
Smoking and gaping the morning away,

And handling his pistols now and then;
Shabby enough in his dressing-gown,
With a soiled shirt on, and his slippers down,
And a scarlet fez with a tassel blue
Perched on his head, not over-new.

But as soon as the morning he 'd worried by,
The grub would change to a butterfly —
Burst from his chrysalis, and appear
Like an English milord, with a million a-year;
And when his elaborate toilet was done,
He really fancied he looked like one.
Yet, despite his short bepocketed coat,
His mutton-chop whiskers, and well-shaved throat,
And English neck-tie, and laced-up boot,
He still was Italian from head to foot.

By slowly dressing, an hour he killed,
And then the serious duty fulfilled
Of showing himself all up and down
The Corso's length to the lazy town,
Bowing and lifting his glossy hat,
Or pausing to air his innocent chat
At the carriage of Lady this or that;
And to be English out and out,
He bought a dog-cart, and drove about,
Sitting high, with majestic pride,
A tiger behind, and a friend at his side,
And a boule-dogue staring between his knees,
As like an Englishman as two peas.

He thought so at least, if we did not;
So, up and down, at a solemn trot,
With his reins held tight, as if his steed
Were wild with spirit, blood, and breed
(Though, if the simple truth be told,
It was eighteen years since he was foaled),
He drove, white-gloved, his reverend beast,
And looked like an English Sir Smith at least.

At night he went to his opera-stall,
When there was neither a party nor ball;
And, knowing the opera all by rote,
He hummed with the tenor, soprano, or bass,
Keeping ahead by a bar or note,
And winning by half a length the race;
Or, turning around with an earnest face,
He studied the circle from ceiling to floor,
With a cheap lorgnette he had hired at the door;
Or, wandering about from box to box,
With his white cravat and his oily locks,
He played with some lady's fan and smiled,
And remarked that the weather was cold or mild;
Asked when she would receive his call —
Hoped it would be a gay Carnival;
Said Lady X. was a beautiful woman —
Heard she intended to give a ball;
Knew that young American there,
The pretty girl with a rose in her hair,
The daughter, they say, of Barnum the showman —

Would have a million dollars for *dôt;*
And half he sighed at his different lot.
And with chat like this, that offended no man,
Of people and parties and weather and wealth,
And asking of everybody's health,
He talked like any agreeable Roman.

Giannone had but an empty head —
But then the worst of him is said:
A better heart, or a readier hand,
To help in whatever was plotted and planned,
You never would see in our English land.
He sang at our parties — was ready to hop
In polka, mazurka, schottische, or galopp;
Or led the cotillon till all of the girls
Had danced in the morning, and danced out their curls,
And the tired musicians were ready to drop.
He bargained for carriages, horses, and grooms —
Hired music for balls, sent flowers to your rooms —
Arranged all the picnics, and fluttered about
At every tea-drinking, party or rout —
Talked terrible French, and at times even spoke
In English, said "Yas, meese," and thought it a joke.

A "guardia nobile" was Giannone,
By which he earned sufficient money
For his gloves, shirt-buttons, boots, and hat,

Though it was scarcely enough for that.
And splendid he was on a gala-day,
With his jingling sword and scarlet coat,
And his long jack-boots and helmet gay,
When along the streets he used to trot;
And great good-luck it was to meet
Giannone when you wanted a seat
To hear the chant of the Miserere,
Or to get on the balcony high and airy,
To see the Papal procession go
Over St. Peter's pavement below,
Streaming along in its gorgeous show.
And then at Carnival such bouquets —
Such beautiful bon-bons, and princely ways —
Such elegant wavings of hat and hand —
Such smiles that no one could withstand —
Such compliments, as made ours seem
Like pale skim-milk to his rich cream.

Giannone's dream was always this,
To find some beautiful English "Miss,"
With a pretty face and plenty of money,
Who should fall in love and marry Giannone.

Poor fellow! he met with a different fate,
The manner of which I will now relate,
And he caught it just through imitation
Of some of the ways of our English nation.

Travel as much as we English will,
Down to the death we are English still —

The brandy and ale that we have at home,
And the sherry and port, we must have in Rome.
These thin Italian wines, we think,
Are a wishy-washy kind of drink.
Travel we must, if only to say
We are better in England every way;
And we honestly think, when we get abroad,
That England alone was made by God,
While the rest of the earth, though nobly planned,
Was finished by some apprentice's hand.
All that 's not English in our eyes
Is something to sneer at, and jeer, and despise.
As for a foreigner, it 's our rule
To consider him either a knave or fool;
And our sense of a kindness by one bestowed
Weighs on our minds like an awkward load,
Till we 've asked our new acquaintance to dine,
And paid off the favor with beef and wine,
And introduced him to all our set.
So it happened that Hycombe Wycombe Brown,
Of the Sussex Wycombes, a man about town,
The nephew, you know, of Sir Hycombe Guy,
Who was slain at the storming of Alisalih,
And left his name to the Gazette,
And put our Hycombe quite at his ease
With I know not how many lacs of rupees
(And he lacked them enough till then, if you
please).
Well, owing Giannone a kind of debt
For buying some horses, or some such work,

He sent him a card of defiance one day
To meet him at point of the knife — and fork,
And settle the matter without delay.
Giannone accepted, of course, and then,
As Wycombe's Italian was rather weak,
He asked a few of us resident men
Who knew the language, as seconds, to speak,
And among them, slim and sleek and sly,
Was your pious friend with his balking eye.
The dinner was good, and all were merry,
And plenty there was of champagne and sherry;
And the toasts were brisk and the wine was good,
And we all took quite as much as we should.
Then we went to cards; and depend upon it,
Though our seasoned brains the drink withstood,
There was a bee in Giannone's bonnet;
But to play we went — it was only whist,
But a little mill answers for little grist,
And Giannone was soon cleaned out of all
He had saved for bouquets at Carnival,
And of course he felt a little vext,
Though "Pazienza" was still his text.

But playing 's dry work, and, I 'm sorry to say,
Brandy was ordered to whet the play;
And Giannone kept drinking, in imitation
Of this happy custom of our nation,
Till at last his tongue had lost its rein,
And the fire had all gone into his brain.

So he began to talk quite wild,
And spoke all his thoughts out like a child;
And secrets he ought to have kept in his breast
Plumped out of his mouth like young birds from
their nest;
And names he called, and his voice was high
As he talked of Italian liberty!
And cursed the priests as the root of all evil,
And sent the Cardinals all to the devil!
And, "now," he cried, "they have it their way,
But every dog must have his day;
And the time will come, and that before long,
When the weak will rise and drive over the
strong,
And the Tricolor over the Vatican fly,
And vivas be heard for liberty!
No more King Stork, and no more Pope Log,
Fouling Italy's boot in their bog.
Better dig with the bayonet's point our graves,
And die to be freemen, than live to be slaves!
Ah, fight we will! There is nothing good
Which must not be first baptized in blood.
Let us alone, you tricking French,
Let us alone, you Austrian sneaks,
And we will purge the Augean stench
That in Bomba's and Pius's stable reeks.
We ask no help from Gascon or Guelph,
Italia will do it alone — by herself."

When the wine is in, at times the wit
To a kindle of savage flame is lit;

And Giannone, who in his common mood
Thinks more of gloves and perfumes than blood,
Now looked and talked like a man inspired,
And his thoughts blazed up as if they were fired,
And his lamping eyes (as calm as a cow's
In his everyday) now seemed to rouse
And burn beneath his low black brows.
We looked at him in amazement then,
And said, "These Italians *au fond* are men,
Veneered with ignorance though they be,
And cowed and imbruted by slavery;
Let them be roused by war or love,
They are fiercer than any of us, by Jove!"

But all the while that Giannone let fly
These arrows of his, with a dead-cold eye
Your friend sat playing, and now and then
Gleamed up with a glance as sharp as a pen
That seemed to write down every word,
And then looked away as he had not heard;
And whenever he opened his lips, he said
Something about the game, — "You 've played
A heart to my club: — we 're one to six;
Yours are the honors and ours the tricks."

We all were Englishmen there, you know,
And we English to suspect are slow;
But this fellow's air and sneaking look
Were something I somehow could not brook;
So I watched him well, and at last said I
To myself, "The rascal must be a spy."

The thought like an arrow of fate struck home —
You know how these sudden conclusions come,
Beyond our reason, beyond our will,
And, lightening down with electric thrill,
Reveal in one clear and perfect flash
A world that before was doubt and gloom.
So "Zitto! Zitto! don't be so rash,
Giannone," I cried; "who knows what ear
May be listening at the door to hear?"
And then, with a laugh, and looking straight
At this *friend* of yours, with his face sedate,
I added, "Who knows but there may be
A spy even here in this company?"

If I doubted before the trade of your friend,
My doubts in a moment had their end;
For a glance came straight up into my eyes
From under his lids, half fear, half surprise,
As an adder on which you chance to tread
Starts up, and darts his fangs from his head,
And then slips swiftly into the shade.
So turning back with a look demure,
And a deprecating, pious air,
As much as to say, "We must not care,
If our purposes are but high and pure,
But quell our passions and our pride,
And bear the stigma of human shame,
Knowing the means are justified
By the noble end," — he slowly said,

Speaking, of course, about the game,
"The trick is mine — 't was the knave I played."

Now the snakes that in Italy's bosom lie
Are the twins Suspicion and Jealousy;
And the eggs from which they creep and crawl
Are hatched in the secret confessional.
Wherever you go you may hear them hiss
'Neath the covert of studied hypocrisies.
Truth is dangerous, — eyes will spy,
And ears will hear, though nobody 's nigh;
And the safest thing is to learn to lie.
So a daily distrust is engendered and bred,
That saps one's faith in the friend most dear,
And creeps to sleep in the marriage-bed,
Till the dearest and nearest you learn to fear.

The Government never forgets the rule
That it early learns in the Church's school:
Divide and conquer — that is the way.
Threaten the weak, the frank betray;
Cajole and promise — you need n't pay.
Save your children by playing your rods,
And give up to Cæsar the things that are — God's.

And oh! my children, listen and hear —
Whatever the Church commands, revere;
And distrust men's words with a holy fear;

And wherever you go, and whatever you see,
Worship only the powers that be,
And talk no nonsense of liberty.

This is the creed that Giannone knew
Better by far than I or you;
So no sooner the dread word "Spy" I spoke,
Than his fine discourse like a pipe-stem broke;
But looking around with a startled stare,
And seeing we only were English there,
His fear dropped off like a snake's old skin,
And again with a laugh we heard him begin.

"Ah!" he cried, "there 's a dirty trick
In the very word that makes me sick;
You English don't know as well as I
The slobber and slime of a Government Spy.

"Ser Serpente, permit me now
To introduce him — a *friend* of mine —
Smooth, pale, bloodless lips and brow —
A long black coat, whose rubbed seams shine —
Spots on his waistcoat of grease and wine —
A tri-cornered hat all rusty with use —
Long black coarse stockings and buckled shoes;
Ah! so polite with his bows and smiles,
And his sickening compliments and wiles,
And his little serpent venomous eyes,
And his swollen chops of beastly size.
Look at the hypocrite! There he stands,

With the unctuous palms of his dirty hands
Folded together breast-high, while he sneaks
Cringing behind them wherever he speaks;
He dares not look you straight in the eyes,
But, sidling and simpering, askance alway,
He oils you over with wheedling lies,
As the boa slimes ere he swallows his prey.
Any day you may see him, he haunts
Half the cafés and restaurants;
His eye on his paper fixed, — his ear
Gleaning the talk at the table near.
No pride in *him*, — he will lick your shoes,
Thanks you for kicking him — loves abuse —
Calls it the natural spirit of youth;
Anything 's sweet to him but truth.
Drop a bad word in that fellow's way,
He picks it up as a vulture its prey;
Hating whatever is wholesome and good,
And living only on carrion food.
Let him say 'rose,' it will stink in his breath.
Many a fellow owes him his death
Just for a strong word, spoken may be
When the blood was hot and the tongue too free.
But at last he reckoned without his host,
And in throwing his dirty dice he lost;
And one morning they found him taking his rest
In the street, with a dagger stuck in his breast.
And served him right, say you and I,
It was only too easy a death for a Spy."

At this your *friend* threw down his card,
Saying, "You 've won to-night, 't is true,
But to-morrow I 'll have my revenge on you."
And though these words to his friend he spoke,
He looked at Giannone so sharp and hard,
With such a sinister evil look,
That a dark suspicion in me awoke.
So the good Giannone's arm I took,
And crying, "I 'm off — will you go with me?"
Took him away from the company;
And after a mile of midnight Rome,
Left him safe in his den at home.

This, you 'll say, and I 'll confess,
Was merely suspicion — no more nor less;
Yet I could not get it out of my head
Long after I was warm in my bed,
That something might happen by-and-by
To prove this fellow was only a Spy.

Two days after I went to see
Whether Giannone would walk with me —
Two sharp bell-pulls at his door;
No answer — gone out; then one pull more,
And "Ho, Giannone, Giannone, 't is I!"
Then slipped a slide back cautiously
From a little grated hole — "Chi è"
From a woman's voice — "Che vuole lei?"
And a shuffle of slippers when it was known
Who "*I*" was, and that I was alone.
"And where is the Signor Padrone?" I cried.

" Ah ! " with a sort of convulsive groan,
The poor old servant, sighing, replied,
" Does n't your Signoria know —
Such times — such times — oime ! oibo !
The sbirri came here yesterday,
And carried the caro padrone away ;
And they 've rifled his desk of letters and all,
And taken the pistols and swords from the wall,
And locked up the room with a great red seal
Put over the door ; and they scared me so,
With threats if I dared in the chamber to go,
That I 'm all of a tremble from head to heel ;
And when the bell rang, I thought it must be
Some of the sbirri come back for me.
What it 's about we none of us know,
But his mother and sisters are in such a fright,
They 've been weeping and praying the livelong
night.
And oh, I fear, Signore dear,
There 's some dreadful political business here ;
Ahimè ! " and she wiped away a tear.

The servant's story was all too true ;
I did, of course, all there was to do,
Begged, bribed, and petitioned, but all in vain.
From that night I never saw him again.
Worse, neither I nor his family knew,
Nor will you unless your friend explain,
And Giannone himself is as ignorant too —
What was his crime — what done— what said,

That drew this punishment down on his head.
This one fact alone we know,
That since the speech of that famous night
Giannone has vanished out of sight,
And has gone to pass a year or so,
Longer perhaps, — how can one say? —
In a building where the Government pay
His lodging and board in the kindest way.
The lodging perhaps is rather bare,
And the boarding is not the best of fare,
And the company 's queer that 's gathered there —
Made up of fellows with speech more free
Than one hears in the best society;
And some of whose notions are rather opaque
Of the laws that govern property;
So that sometimes they make a mistake
In that little distinction 'twixt *meum* and *tuum;*
But then, as the Roman laws are in Latin,
Which, even in Rome, one is not pat in,
Farther, I mean, than an Ave or Matin,
It takes a scholar to read them at all;
And supposing one *has* read thoroughly through 'em,
There 's a slippery space 'twixt see 'em and do 'em,
Where Grotius himself might trip and fall.

Well — here in this cheerful company,
Where the cushions are not of silk and satin,

And on fare one cannot honestly praise,
Our poor Giannone passes his days.
It is not precisely the place to grow fat in,
And the library 's wanting, as yet, I hear,
And I 'm told that the view from the window is
drear,
And the host will never allow a fire,
And, besides, has ways that are rather queer
Of locking the doors, which interfere
With the perfect freedom one might desire.
But beggars cannot be choosers, you see,
And to look a gift-horse in the mouth would be
Such a breach of manners — yet, as for me,
I cannot help wishing the end would come
Of this public hospitality,
And that poor Giannone was free to go home.
But when will *that* be? you ask me — Ah!
That is the question; Chi lo sa?
Whenever it pleases the powers that be, —
Next month — next year — next century!

Now, there are the facts for my suspicion
About your friend and his pretty profession;
They 're as plain to me as two ones in addition,
And I put them all into your possession.

## AUNT RACHEL'S STORY.

With booming hum the pertinacious bee
Goes beating here and there, the butterfly
Drifts idly on the wind, the feathery buds
Are dangling from the willow's yellow twigs,
Its limp, green fingers the horse-chestnut spreads,
The daring tulip in the garden nods,
And from the centre of its painted cup
Thrusts its black tongue. The Spring returns again
With musical breezes and the trill of birds,
And furrows dark, fringed by the young grain's green,
And thickening hedges where at height of noon
The thin air simmers, and the wakened flies
Begin to wheel and whisper in the warmth.

'T is May again — but how unlike the May
Of years ago — of that young May of life
When aimless as a summer cloud, the heart,
Freighted with light and touched with roseate hues,
Sailed far above the sordid cares of earth
In the pure heaven of feeling. Yes, 't is May,
Not the old May; for May is changed indeed

Since those old times, when love and hope looked
out
Of the heart's windows — when we both were
girls
In our first freedom. Yet not all these years
Have cloven our hearts asunder — in the loam
Of early memories our friendship roots —
Thought-interlaced like these two branching elms.

Dear memories! lofty as the "Silverhorns,"
Whose spotless heights into the blue sky pierce
To play with morning, — yet not cold and bare
As those steep splendors, but with tender grass
And flowers o'ergrown, like to those lower slopes
Where tinkle the faint cow-bells, and long notes
Of the far shepherd's horn calling his herds
Float o'er the air-abysses — pastures fair
Are they to us, serene although so sad,
And brooded over by a thoughtful haze,
Where herds of sweet thoughts wander far above
Life's lower valley lying in the shade.

Gone are the blossoms of our Young Ro-
mance —
Alas! the very leaves are almost gone,
Yet through the branches we can clearly see
Heaven's light that once was hidden by their
wealth.

At moments only can we feel how far
Our youth lies from us — as we drift along

All things drift with us — 't is but now and then
Some sudden contrast screams to us the truth.

With some such thought as this, an hour ago
I saw our dear old friend and hostess here,
With her starched widow's cap, prim snowy ruff,
And sombre dress, walk staidly down the path
And pause beneath the elms — then reaching up,
Pluck from the lilac hedge a fragrant bunch
Wet with the morning — rain its dew away
With a quick shake — and slowly pass along.
I wondered with what thought she smelled that bunch
Of lilac? for I smelled my youth in it.
The flower, her movement, to my mind recalled,
How suddenly, the time when we were girls.
I saw her young, slight form, the happy face
Laughing through golden hair, and youth's light step
That spurns the ground it clings unto at last.
Swift as a shuttle flies, the vision passed,
But left behind in the dark weft of thought
Its brilliant thread that on the sombre ground
Conspicuous showed: the Past and Present clashed
Like two sweet bells that are not in accord.
I saw at once as in a magic glass
This sad, subdued, and overwearied woman,
And the young, gay, impetuous, laughing girl.

You only knew her when her youth was past,

But not the same was she in face or mind,
As in those days when Love and Passion throbbed
Across her eloquent cheeks, (like a swift hand
Across a mystic harp,) and struck a fire
In those wild eyes, that now are all so calm.
What zest, what brilliancy, was in her wit —
What relish of Life that would not be repressed
In formal bounds — what mad delight in fun —
What salient girlhood. Love that early came,
But deepened to an ample river depth
The wild young torrent: unto those two hearts,
To hers and Marion's, Life flowed on so smooth —
They were so happy, fitting each to each
In taste and temper like two clasping hands —
That there seemed nothing left to ask of Fate,
It had not given. Oft and oft we said,
Beholding them, "Such fortune sometimes comes
At happy moments and to happy souls,
To give a footing to those climbing dreams
The sneering world calls vaporous, foolish, false,
And in the world of facts to keep alive
A wise belief in visionary things."

Glad was their horoscope — no evil star
Foreboded danger when he said good-bye,
And parted as he thought for three short months
Across the ocean. Ah! how blind we were
Who thought that Fate would always brim their hearts,
As it had brimmed them. Tremble ye who have
The Samian Ring; oh! ask not too much luck!

For love's perfection breaks so easily!
One drop of poison cracks a Venice glass.

Three months he said — those three months slowly passed,
And month on month went following in their track,
And year on year for three long years — no word
Breaking the dreadful silence — no report
Of life or death, when no report was death.

As one who borne along the rattling rails
Dashes from sunlit plains, pure air, blue sky,
Down a chill tunnel's gloomy dripping cliffs,
She shot from life to death — nor felt at first,
After such glad excess of love and light,
The dim faint lamp left burning in its stead;
But yet as time went on her eye grew used
To that more solemn atmosphere of grief,
And patience served her in the place of love.

Youth suffers sharply but not long — it bends
Before the storm, as the young birch-tree bends
And then springs back. Yet sorrow leaves behind
A poison drop no art can purge away
That taints our joy — that kills our confidence.
The glad, unthinking trust of youth, once crushed,
Is crushed forever. — So it was with her;
Joy, which before she owned, seemed now but lent;

She trembled while she held the commonest gift
Of daily fortune, and within herself
Shrunk up; a still, secluded life she lived,
A life of memory, books, and household cares.

Years went — and love's sweet memories were hid,
Like playthings that a mother fondly hoards
Of her lost child, long wept in secret o'er,
And sadly visited with grief that time
Made tenderer ever, till it drew at last
A scarce-felt veil of shadow o'er her thought.

Her hope was smothered in her heart, not dead.
How oft a sudden noise would make her start,
And bring a quick flush in her cheek, — how oft
Of winter nights, when we beside the blaze
Sat cheerful, would she leave the fireside group
If the wind soughed too loudly in the trees,
Or shook the windows with its gusts of rain.
How oft she went, without apparent cause,
And gazed at twilight down the avenue,
Like one expecting something — and at times
How fixed to go, despite the cold and rain,
Alone, to take the letters from the post.

Oft at her father's fireside came a friend,
Older by many years, refined in thought,
Of generous heart and gentle in his mien.

With quiet talk of nature and of art,
He cheered her fancies, bore her oft away
From the dull present to historic times.
By Fancy led, she trod on other shores,
Paced galleries thronged by pictured pageantry
Or marble life — or leaned on balustrades
Along the Alban hills or Tuscan slopes
And breathed the faint, sweet odors floating up
From orange groves, while thrilled the nightingale
His liquid song — or silent slid along
In her black gondola 'neath carven walls
Of shadowy palaces, or in twilight blaze
Beheld St. Marco's glittering crust of gold; —
Through the wild gorges of the Alps he bore
Her visionary footsteps, thrilled her heart
With tales of terror on those glacial heights
Where climbs the chamois, or the tourbillon
Drives its white whirl of thunder down the steeps;
Across the desert, up the slumberous Nile
She journeyed where the fernlike palm-trees grow,
Throwing their shadow on the blear white tombs,
Or where black Egypt, with its palms outspread
On its close knees, in marble sadness sits,
Or further on into the land of dreams,
Broke the pomegranate on Arabian ground,
And trod the city of Scheherezade.

The spoils of travel hung upon his walls
Or crammed portfolios, over which they turned

For hours, delighted — and her thoughts this way
Acquired a happier bias: oft they walked
Along this road, where tangled blackberries net
The loose piled wall, or late in the afternoon
Strolled slowly through the yellow-lighted fields.

You know his house, built in the olden time,
Its spacious rooms — its broad and spacious hall,
Where the old clock ticked ever on the stairs,
And that fair prospect from the windows seen;
I see it yet. There lies the flat, green marsh
On which the o'er-brimming river at neap tides
Spreads its broad silver, and where lightning-flies
Flash all night long. There slope the hills beyond,
Besprinkled with white houses and dark groves,
Along whose base the white snake of the train
Steals vanishing — and nearer at my feet,
Upon the lawn's short grass at anchor lie
Great shadows, tethered to the spreading foot
Of lofty elms that swing their pendant boughs.
Above the spring-fed pond tall dark-haired pines,
Lone lingering sachems of their forest tribe,
Grouped as in council, whisper to the breeze
Their mournful memories. There in early frost
Amid their darkness gleamed with yellow fire
Some slim white birches: — there the sumac glowed
And showed its velvet cones, while o'er broad fields

The ripe oats rippled, and tall masts of maize
Waved their green flags and spilled their yellow silk.

Such was the scene through which they wandered oft
And talked of men and books — his heart the while
Absorbing love — as flowers take from the light
Their color, slowly, without suddenness.
And one late afternoon returning home,
That love found utterance — unto her alone
His words came with surprise, and fired a train
Of smouldering thoughts, blind hopes, dear memories
Half pain, half joy, a dim confused heap,
Pushed out of sight, yet wanting but a touch
To blaze through every ward of heart and brain.
'T was the old story — love, at first refused,
Renewed its claim, and friendship, second best,
With admirable reasoning pressed its suit;
Worldly advantage, wealth, position, urged
Their present claims above a hopeless love,
And after tossing to and fro in doubt,
Reluctant still, yet able to oppose
Only a feeling deemed fantastical,
A hope (that floated ever like a buoy
Above the wreck of all her life and love)
That Marion might be living, might return
To make her his, she yielded her consent.

I was her bridesmaid — tremblingly and pale
She stood before the altar, when she pledged
Her heart to his; but when the rites were o'er
She grew composed — a flush of color came
Into her delicate cheek, and, with a smile,
She bade us all good-by — as if she said,
The Past is Past, welcome the Future now.

Sitting beside her when a month had passed,
In pleasant talk of friends, which, deepening on,
Touched on her early grief, and the lost hopes
That lit her morning — all at once our ears
Were startled by quick steps upon the walk;
She trembled — I confess I trembled too,
Touched by a strange foreboding — neither spake —
But a quick flush ran over her pale face,
Then vanished — like those summer-lightning heats
That lift along the horizon's evening edge,
And glow an instant but to leave more weird
The after darkness. In a moment more
The door swung open, and the well-known form
Of Marion stood before us: — with a shriek
She started, staggered forward, while a look
That haunts me still of wild and deep despair
Convulsed her face, — and flinging up her arms,
Muttered, "I knew it! — Ah! too late," and swooned.

We bathed her temples, bore her to a couch,
And long we hung above her, ere the life
Came back to her white cheeks. Alas! that hour
Of agony, which followed when her sense
Again returned — what explanations wild —
What bursts of tears, that smothered the thick voice, —
With silences more dreadful, like those deep
And dread crevasses leading down to death
Smoothed over by the treacherous snow. What fierce
Self-accusations and complaints of Fate
These two hearts uttered! But at last a calm
Came over them, a calm like that which comes
After the foundering of a glorious hope,
When all alone in the great sea of Time
We find ourselves upon a drifting raft.

You know his story; tempest, war, and chance
Conspired to mar his plans; — a shipwreck first,
Then cruel waiting for another ship,
And long imprisonment on hostile shores, —
These kept him back and ruined all his life.

Death had been almost better than return,
Her mind was braced to that — but every hour
To own the terrible presence of a thought,
Half of remorse and half of vain regret,
That would intrude, a ghost at every feast,

This was more hard to bear for him and her.
So, when he died, a weight from off her heart
Seemed lifted, and she grew more still and calm.

And now, long years — long, serious, thoughtful years
Have strewn with their dead leaves her life and ours,
And life has lost those early passionate joys,
That sang and fluttered in Spring's blossomy boughs
Like these gold orioles that among the elms
Quiver like living fruit. — Well, age has brought
Perhaps its compensation. Youth's gay days
Hung round the walls of memory have gained
The tone of rare old pictures and a fine
Ideal hue, that time alone can give.

But the gate creaks — our friend is coming back.
Say, would you think, to see that serious face,
With its quaint smiles — to hear that sharp, high tone
Half-jesting, half sarcastic, she had known
Such strange romance as this when she was young?

## THE THREE SINGERS.

"WHERE is a singer to cheer me ?
My heart is weary with sadness,
I long for a verse of gladness ! "
Thus cried the Shah to his Vizier.

He sat on his couch of crimson,
And silent he smoked, and waited,
Till a youth, with face elated,
Entered, and bent before him.

He swung the harp from his shoulder,
And ran o'er its strings, preluding,
O'er his thought for a moment brooding,
Then his song went up into sunshine.

It leaped, like the fountain, breaking
At the top of its aspiration ;
It fell from its culmination,
In tears, to life's troubled level.

He sang of the boundless future,
That had the gates of the morning,
His fancies the song adorning,
Like pearls on a white-necked maiden.

"My hope, like a hungered lion,"
He sang, "for its prey is panting;
Oh! what is so glad, so enchanting,
As Manhood, and Fame, and Freedom.

"To youth there is nothing given,
The fruit on the high palm groweth,
And thither life's caravan goeth,
For rest and delight in its shadow."

He ceased, — and the Shah, half smiling,
Beckoned, and said, "Stay near me,
Your song hath a charm to cheer me:
Ask! what you ask shall be given.

"Now bring me that other singer,
That ere I was born enchanted
The world with a song undaunted!"
They went, — and an old man entered.

His forehead, beneath his turban,
Was wrinkled, — he entered slowly, —
Bending — and bending more lowly,
Waited, — the Shah commanded —

"Sing me a song;" his fingers
Over the light strings trembled,
And the sound of the strings resembled
The wind, in the cypresses grieving.

He sang of the time departed,
In his song, as in some calm river,
Where temples and palm-trees quiver,
But pass not — his youth was imaged.

" Our shadow, that lay behind us,
Ere the noonday sun passed o'er us,
Now darkens the path before us,
As we walk away from our morning.

" Oh! where are the friends that beside us
Walked in the garden of roses?
The dear head no longer reposes
On the bosom, to feel the heart's beating.

" Oh, Life! 't is a verse so crooked,
On Fate's sharp scimitar written,
And Joy — a pomegranate bitten
By a worm that preys at its centre."

He ceased, and the harp's vibration
Throbbed only, — a slow tear twinkled
On the rim of those eyes, so wrinkled,
And the fountain renewed its plashing.

The Shah was silent — a dimness
Clouded his eyes — from his finger
He drew a great ruby — the singer
Bowed low at this token of honor.

At last, from his musing arousing,
He spoke, "Is there none you can bring me
The praise of the present to sing me?
Seek him — and bring him before me."

He waited — the morning — the noonday
Passed — at last, when the shadows
Lengthened on gardens and meadows,
A poor, maimed cripple they brought him.

"What! *you* sing the praise of the Present;
You, by Fortune and Fate so forsaken,
What charms can the Present awaken?"
"I love, and am loved," was the answer.

## THE BATTLE OF MORAT.

Our men fought well at Morat! They fought
like lions, boy,
Like lions, that within their lair the hunter dares
annoy.
Ah! now I 'm old, but I was then a boy as you
are now,
And this old tree was nothing but a bit of broken
bough.

'T is sixty good long years ago — how fast the
years go by,
Since we crushed, that deadly day of June, the
hosts of Burgundy;
The morning threatened thick with cloud, a weird
and solemn gloom
Hung o'er the town — the empty streets were
silent as a tomb,

Save here and there where little groups with sad
and anxious brow,
Old men, and boys, and women, were gathered
talking low,

Recounting news of Burgundy in words of doubt
and fear,
Or tales of our own mountain strength their
trembling hearts to cheer.

Some wrung their hands the while they spoke —
in many a maiden's eye
The slow tears brimmed, the pale mouth twitched
in secret agony,
And old men sadly shook their heads, while at
their mother's side
Children were pulling at their gowns, and asking
why they cried.

Sad o'er us hung the sullen sky, — our hearts
were dark with gloom,
When suddenly the cannon's peal, with heavy
muffled boom,
Rolled dully smiting on the heart, that for a mo-
ment stilled,
Stopped in the breast, then wildly like a hurried
drum-beat thrilled.

'T was then, ere rang their battle-cry, our broth-
ers in the field
Bared their stern brows, and on the earth to ask
God's blessing kneeled;
And Hans Von Hallwyll lifted, while all were
silent there,
'Mid the thunder voice of cannon, the still, small
voice of prayer.

The heavens hung gray and gloomy above them
lowly bowed,
But as they prayed the sudden sun broke through
the shattered cloud
And flashed across their bended ranks, and Hall
wyll from his knee
Sprang shouting — Up! behold, God lights the
way to victory!

Ah, why was I not with them? why was I
doomed to stay,
An idle boy to range along the ramparts all that
day?
The cannon thrilled my startled blood — the
Landshorn shrilly cried,
Flee from old men and women! strike for free-
dom at our side!

Alas, I could not flee from them! half mad in
heart and brain,
I watched with them the smoke-cloud cling along
the distant plain;
We strained our eyes in vain, — we seemed to
hear with nervous ears,
The battle cry of Burgundy — the Eidgenossen's
cheers.

We fought with them in spirit in the tumult of
the fight,
We swung our swords with Hallwyll for Liberty
and Right,

With Waldman's band of rugged Swiss adown
the hill we clove
Through the shining helms of Burgundy, as
through some tall pine grove

Our avalanches thunder — We crushed them to
the earth,
We swept them from the hill-side with a wild
exultant mirth —
We slid upon their horsemen, and hurled them
to the lake
In terror and confusion — as the landslides when
they break

Adown our mountain gorges, — in a heap of
steel and blood,
And shattered cuirasses and helms, they rolled
into the flood;
Their hands that gleamed with diamonds in vain
they lifted high,
As the red wave bubbled over them, and drowned
their fearful cry.

We rushed with old Von Hertenstein, his white
hair streaming free,
Where Hallwyll battled with the pride of
knightly Burgundy;
With the mountain force of stout Lucerne we
sheared them from the plain,
And mowed their glittering sheaves of spears
like fields of autumn grain!

What served their Orders then to them, their
proud and knightly blood?
It stained the grass and lay in pools amid the
trampled mud;
Their jewelled chains we scattered — and on
gleaming breast and brain,
Our great swords rattling in their ears played
Liberty's refrain.

Leap! baffled Duke of Burgundy, — leap on thy
swiftest steed!
The Bear of Berne is after thee — spur at thine
utmost need!
Plunge in that reeking, quivering flank, thy
golden spur, and flee
Till his nostrils gush with blood and steam —
Lucerne is hunting thee.

Leave, leave upon the hill-side your twenty thou-
sand slain,
Leave in the lake your heaps of dead, its waves
with gore to stain.
Speed! speed! and when night darkens down —
blown, beaten, blasted, stand,
With only thirty ghastly horsemen left of all
your band.

Such hope as this was thrilling us the while we
leaned and gazed,
With clenching hands, and young fierce eyes,
and cheeks that hotly blazed;

But oft the fear of dread defeat, and conquest pouring down
Above our murdered, shattered ranks to deluge all the town

With rapine and with ravage, knocked against our hearts with dread;
We heard the crackling rafters crash above our fated head,
We saw the red flames lick the air and glare against the sky,
And 'mid the screams of women rang the clash of soldiery.

At last the distant thunder ceased — and as we strained our eyes
We saw above the road's far ridge a little dust-cloud rise;
And on it came, and on, and on, upon the dry white road,
Until a dark and moving spot like a running figure showed.

News from the field! what news, what news? — alas, our brothers fly!
No, no, he waves a branch of lime — that tells of Victory.
He staggers, wounded, on, he reels, he faints beside the gate;
Speak! speak! — he cannot speak — and yet 't is agony to wait.

We gather round, as through the street with reeling, staggering pace,
He falls along — and panting, points towards the market place.
There, while the blood starts from his mouth, he waves the branch on high,
And with a last faint shout expires, exclaiming, Victory!

That branch of lime we planted in the spot whereon he fell,
And there it took its root, and throve, and spread its branches well,
And you shall sit beneath its shade, as now we sit, when I
Am dust — and say, "My Grandsire brought that branch of Victory."

## THE CONFESSIONAL.

FORGIVE me, Father! Those were wild, bad
words,
From the foul bottom of my heart stirred up
By agitation. — Turn not thus away,
I will repent — I think I *do* repent, —
Yet who can answer, when temptation comes,
For calm resolves? When windy passion swells
The turbulent thoughts, our weakly-builded dykes
Burst, and the overbearing sea, let through,
In one wild rush pours in, and swirls away
Our boasted resolutions, like light chips.

Yet, holy Father! give me now your hand,
And I will try to think of youth and home,
And violets in spring, and all sweet things
I used to love, when I was innocent,
For they may calm me — Yet, no! no! 't is vain!
The great black wall of yesterday shuts out
All other yesterdays that went before;
I cannot overpeer its horror and look down
Into the peaceful garden-plot beyond.

I was not all to blame. You, who have heard
So many tales of passion, lean your ear,

And I will tell you mine — but make the sign,
The blessed sign of the cross, ere I begin.

'T was twilight — and the early lighted lamps
Were flickering down into the Arno's tide
While yet the daylight lingered in the skies,
Silvering and paling — when I saw him first.
I was returning from my work, and paused
Upon the Bridge of Santa Trinitā,
To rest, and think how fair our Florence is,
How sweet the air smelt after that close room,
And how privation, like a darkened tube,
Made joy the sweeter, through its darkness seen.

And I remember, o'er the hazy hills
Far, far away, how exquisitely fair
The twilight seemed that night — my heart was soft
With tender longings, misted with a dim
Sad pleasure — as a mirror with the breath —
(Ah! never will those feelings come again.)
I wondered if the thronging crowd that passed
Felt half the wondrous beauty of the hour;
And I was in a mood to take a stamp
From any passing chance, — even like those clouds
That caught the tenderest thrill of dying light, —
When by some inward sense, I know not what,
I felt that I was gazed at, drawn away
By eyes that had a strange magnetic will,

And so I turned from those far hills to see
A stranger ; — no ! even then he did not seem
A stranger — but as one I once had known,
Not here in Florence, not in any place,
But somehow in my spirit known and seen,
Elsewhere, I know not where, perhaps in dreams;
I felt his eyes were staying upon me,
And a sweet, serious smile was on his mouth,
Nor could I help but look and smile again.
I know not what it was went to and fro
Between us then, in that swift smile and glance ;
But something went that thrilled me through and through,
And fluttered all my thoughts, as when a bird
Shivers with both his wings some peaceful pool :
We neither spoke — but that quick clash of souls
Had struck a spark that set me all a-fire.

With what a turbulent heart I traversed then
The Bridge, and plunged into the narrow streets,
Heavy with shadows, till I gained my room ;
Yet there I could not rest — I leaned from out
My balcony above the street and gazed
At every passer-by, the evening long,
Till midnight struck, and all the humming crowd
Poured home from theatre and opera, —
In hopes to see him. Silent grew the streets,
Save here and there, where rang the echoing feet
Of some late walker singing as he went.

The few lamps on the lonely pavement glared,
The still stars stood in the dark river of night,
That flowed between the house-tops far above,
And all was rest. — At last I lit my lamp,
And with a prayer, (I never prayed till then,
It seemed to me — so fervently I prayed,)
Crept to my bed. Half dreaming, I rehearsed
The evening scene — and saw again his smile —
And wondered who he was — and if again
We ere should meet — and what would come of it —
Until at last I wore away to sleep,
Almost when morning was upon the hills.

And days went by — and that one thought of him
Ran through thought's labyrinth, like a silver clue.
Waking, I did not see my work; I sewed
Love's broidery in with every stitch I made;
And I grew silent, sad, and spiritless,
And ceased to talk and jest as I was wont,
Until Beata laughed at me, and said,
Pointing me out to all the other girls,
"Santa Maria! Nina is in love!"
And all of them looked up at me and laughed;
I could have struck her — but I had to laugh.

At last the Festa of the Madonna came,
And in the costume of my native town,

(I am an Albanese, as you know,)
I, and Beata, and the other girls,
Went to the Duomo, as we always do,
To see the grand procession and hear mass;
And there, I kneeling prayed for him and me.
I heard the laboring organ in the dome
Struggle and groan, and, stopping short, give place
Unto the Bishop's harsh and croaking chant;
I heard, at intervals, the crowd's response
Rising around me with a muffled roar,
The steaming censer clicking as it swung,
The sharp, quick tinkle of the bell; at last
The whole crowd rustling sank upon its knees,
And silence reigned — the host was raised — a strain
Of trumpets sounded — and the mass was o'er;
My heart was full — I lingered when they went,
Beata, Maddalena, Bice, all,
And leaned against a pillar in the choir,
Where Michael Angelo's half-finished group
Stands in the shadow — I, in shadow too —
How long I stood I know not, but a voice
That made my blood stop whispered me at last.
I knew that it was he. What could I do?
He knew I loved him — and I knew he loved.
He said to me . . . Ah! no, I cannot say
What words he said, — to me they were not words;
But ere we parted it was late at night,

And I was happy, — oh, so happy then, —
It seemed as if this earth could never add
One little drop more to the joy I owned,
For all that passionate torrent pent within
My heart had found its utterance and response.

He was Venetian, and that radiant hair
We black-haired girls so covet haloed round
His sunny northern face and soft blue eyes.
I know not why he loved me — me so black,
With this black skin, that every Roman has,
And these black eyes, black hair, that I so hate.
Why loved he not Beata? — she is fair. —
But yet he often took these cheeks of mine
Between his hands, and, looking in my eyes,
Swore that Beata's body was not worth
One half my finger — and then kissed me full
Upon the mouth as if to seal his oath.
Ah! glorious seal — I feel those lips there now!
And on my forehead, too, one kiss still glows
Like a great star — look here — it was the day
He hung this little cross upon my neck,
And pressed his lips, here, just above the eyes.

Ah, well! those days are gone. No! No! No! No!
They are not gone; — I love him madly now,
I love him madly as I loved him then;
And I again would . . . No! I will be calm —

Just place your hand upon my forehead here,
It soothes me — I will try to be more calm.

I gave him all — heart, soul and body — all —
Even the great hope of another world
I would have given for one wish of his;
With him this life was all I asked to have —
'T was Paradise — what more or better then
Was there to hope for? — without him the best
Was only hell — *is* only hell to me.

Ah, God! how blissfully those days went by;
You could not heap a golden cup more full
Of rubied wine than was my heart with joy.
Long mornings in his studio there I sat
And heard his voice — or, when he did not speak
I felt his presence, like a rich perfume,
Fill all my thoughts. At times he 'd rise and come
And sit beside me, take my hands in his,
And call me best and dearest — heaping names
Of love upon me — till beneath their weight
I bent, and clung unto his neck, and wept;
Oh! what glad tears, he kissed them all away.

I was his model — hours and hours I posed
For him to paint his Cleopatra — fierce,
With her squared brows, and full Egyptian lips,
A great gold serpent on her rounded arm,

('T was mine, look now how lean and bony 't is,)
And a broad band of gold around her head;
And oft he 'd say, "I am your Antony,
Ready to fling the world away for you;
But you, if I should fall upon my sword,
You 'd live for Cæsar's triumph — would you not?"
And I, a little vexed, although I knew
He did not mean his words, would laugh and say,
"For all your boast, you men are all the same,
You would not risk a kingdom for your love,
You 'd marry weak Octavia — all of you."

Had I not reason? Yet those foolish words,
They burn here in my memory, like red drops
Of molten brass — those little foolish jests
Were eggs of serpents that now hiss and sting;
I curse my tongue that spoke them — for he loves,
I know he loves me — loves me now as then.

What a long trail of flushed and orient light
Those summer days were! but the autumn came,
The stricken, bleeding autumn came at last.
I saw him grow more serious, day by day,
More fitful, sudden, gusty — something weighed
Upon his mind I could not understand —
I sought to win his secret — but in vain.
"'T is nothing, love," he 'd say — then rising quick,

With sudden push would dash away his hair
From his grand forehead — to the window go,
And with his back turned to me, stand and stare
For full five minutes in the garden there.
I knew all was not right, yet dared not ask.
I waited as we women have to wait.
At last 't was clear, — two words made all things clear —
"Love, I must go to Venice." "Must?" "Yes, must!"
"Then I go too." "No! no! ah! Nina, no —
Four weeks pass swiftly — one short month, and then
I shall return to Florence, and to you."

Vain were my words, he went — alas, he went
With all the sunshine — and I wore alone
The weary weeks out of that hateful month.
Another month I waited, nervous, fierce
With love's impatience — thinking every day
I heard his voice and step upon the stair,
And listening to the carriages all night,
And straining each back as it passed the house, —
With fits of weeping when it rolled away
In the lone midnight. — When that month was gone
My heart was all a-fire — I could not stay,
Consumed with jealous fears that wore me down
Into a fever — Necklace, earrings, all,
I sold — and on to Venice rushed. How long

That dreary never-ending journey seemed!
I cursed the hills, up which we slowly dragged,
The long flat plains of Lombardy I cursed,
With files of poplars stretching out and out,
That kept me back from Venice — but at last
In a black gondola I swam along
The sea-built city, and my heart was big
With the glad thought that I was near to him.
Yes! gladness came upon me that soft night,
And jealousy was hushed, and hope led on
My dancing heart. One little half-hour more
And I should be again within his arms;
And how he 'd be surprised to see me here,
And laugh at me. In vain I strove to curb
My glad impatience, — I must see him then,
At once, that very night — I could not wait
The tardy morning — 't was a year away. —
I only gave the gondolier his name,
And said, "You know him?" "Yes." "Then
row me quick
To where he is." He bowed, and on we went
Threading along the grand canal so swift
The oar sprang to the pressure of his arm;
And as we swept along, I leaned me out
And dragged my burning fingers in the wave,
My hurried heart forecasting to itself
Our meeting — what he 'd say, and do, and
think,
How I should hang upon his neck, and say,
"I could not longer live without you, dear." —

In thought like this, I had no heart to list
The idle babbling of a gondolier ;
I bade him not to talk, but row — row — row !

At last he paused, stretched out his hand, and said,
" There is the palace." I was struck aghast —
It flared with lights that from the windows streamed
And trickled down into the black canal —
Faint bursts of music swelled from out the doors —
A swarm of gondolas close huddling thronged
Around the oozy steps. "Stop! stop!" I cried,
For a wild doubt rushed swiftly through my mind,
That scared me — like a strange noise in a wood
A traveller hears at night, — " 'T is some mistake ;
Why are these lights ? This palace is not his,
He owns no palace." " Pardon," answered he,
" I fancied the Signora wished to see
The marriage festa — and all Venice knows
The bride receives to-night." " What bride, whose bride ? "
I snapped, impatient. " Count Alberti's bride,
Whose else ? " he answered with a shrug. My heart
From its glad singing height dropped like a lark
Shot dead, at those few words. The whole world reeled,

And for a moment I was stunned and crushed ;
Then came the wild revulsion of despair ;
Then calm more dreadful than the fiercest pain.
"Row to the steps," I said. He rowed. I leaped
On their wet edge, and stared in at the door,
Where all was hurry, hum, and buzz, and light.
I was so calm — I never was so calm
As then, despairing. Yet one little jet
Of hope was stirring in that stagnant marsh —
That little jet was all that troubled me —
My eyes ran lightning zigzag through the crowd
In search of him — he was not there — ah, God !
I breathed, — he was not there — I inly cursed
My unbelief, and turned me round to go —
There was a sudden murmur near the door,
And I beheld him walking at her side.
Oh ! cursed be the hour I saw that sight,
And cursed be the place ! — I saw those eyes,
That used to look such passion into mine,
Turned with the self-same look to other eyes
That upward gazed at his — yes, light blue eyes,
Just like Beata's — hers were light blue eyes ! —
I saw her smiling — saw him smiling too,
As they advanced — I could not bear her bliss ;
My heart stood still, and all the hurrying crowd
Seemed spectral, nothing lived but those two forms ;
The Past all broke to pieces with a crash

That stunned me, shattering every power of thought:
I scarcely know what happened then — I know
I felt for the stiletto in my vest,
With purpose that was half mechanical,
As if a demon used my hand for his,
I heard the red blood singing in my brain,
I struck — before me at my feet she fell.

Who was the queen then? Ah! your rank and wealth,
Your pearls and splendors, what did they avail
Against the sharp stiletto's little point?
You should have thought of that before you dared —
You, who had all the world beside — to steal
The only treasure that the Roman girl,
The poor despised black Roman, ever had;
You will not smile again, as then you smiled, —
Thank God! you 'll never smile again for him.
And I alone of all the crowd stood calm;
I was avenged — avenged until I saw
The dreadful look he gave me as he turned
From her dead face and looked in mine — Ah, God!
It haunts me, scares me, will not let me sleep.

When will he come, and tell me he forgives
And loves me still? Oh, Father! bid him come,
Come quickly — come and let me die in peace.

Tell him I could not help it, I was mad,
But I repent, I suffer, — he at least
Should pity and forgive. Oh! make him come
And say he loves me, and then let me die.
I shall be ready then to die — but now
I cannot think of God; my heart is hell,
Is hell, until I know he loves me still.

*January*, 1855.

## A LEGEND.

High noon in Acre blazed, and all the throng
Had sought the shade, when striding stern along
The burning street, and through the open square,
With feet unsandalled and dishevelled hair,
Was seen a figure strange, mysterious, tall,
With face uncovered, yet unknown to all.
Round her she gazed with wild impassioned look,
And in one hand a flaming torch she shook
High o'er her head, and in the other bore
A jar with water brimmed and running o'er, —
And with a high, clear voice she cried, "Behold!
I will burn heaven up with this torch I hold,
And with this jar of water I, as well,
Will quench forever all the fires of hell,
So that when heaven and hell alike are gone,
Man may love God, for God's own sake alone."

# REVERIES.

## AT THE VILLA CONTI.

WHAT peace and quiet in this villa sleep!
Here let us pause, nor chase for pleasure on,
Nothing can be more exquisite than this —
Work, for the nonce farewell — this day we 'll give
To fallow joys of perfect idleness.

See how the old house lifts its face of light
Against the pallid olives that behind
Throng up the hill. — Look down this vista's shade
Of dark square shaven ilexes, where spirts
The fountain's thin white thread, and blows away.
And mark! along the terraced balustrade
Two contadine stopping in the shade,
With copper vases poised upon their heads,
How their red jackets tell against the green!

Old, all is old — what charm there is in age!
Do you believe this villa when 't was new
Was half so beautiful as now it seems?
Look at these balustrades of travertine,
Had they the charm when fresh and sharply carved

As now that they are stained and grayed with time
And mossed with lichens, every grim old mask
That grins upon their pillars bearded o'er
With waving sprays of slender maiden-hair?
Ah no! I cannot think it. — Things of art
Snatch nature's graces from the hand of Time.

Here will we sit and let the sleeping noon
Doze on and dream into the afternoon,
While all the mountains shake in opal light,
Forever shifting, till the sun's last glance
Transfigures with its splendor all our world.

Hark! the cicala crackles mid the trees,
How shrilly! and the toppling fountain spills
The music of its silvery rain, how soft!
Into the broad clear basin — zigzag darts
The sudden dragon-fly across, or hangs
Poised in the sun with shimmer of glazed wings.

And there the exquisite campagna lies
Dreaming what dreams of olden pomp and war,
Of Love, and Pain, and Joy that it has known!
Sadder, perhaps, but dearer than of yore,
With wild-flowers overstrewn, like some loved grave;
Its silent stretches haunted by vast trains
Of ghostly shapes, where stalks majestical,
Mid visionary pomp of vanished days,
The buried grandeur of imperial Rome;

Moaned over by great winds that from the sea
Sweep inland, and by wandering clouds of tears;
How it lies throbbing there beneath the sun,
So silent with its ruins on its breast!
There, far Soracte on the horizon piles
Its lonely peak — and gazes on the sea;
There Leonessa couches in repose,
And stern Gennaro rears its purple ridge,
And wears its ermine late into the spring.
When all beneath is one vast lush of flowers,
And poppies paint whole acres with one sweep
Of their rich scarlet, and entangling vines
Shroud the low walls, and drop from arch to arch
Of the far-running lessening aqueducts,
On his broad shoulders still the imperial robe
Of winter hangs — and leashed within his caves
The violent Tramontana lies in wait.

Dear, dear old Rome — well! nothing is like Rome;
Others may please me, her alone I love.
She is no place as other cities are —
But like a mother and a mistress too,
The soul of places, unto whom I give
How gladly all my heart, and wish it more,
That I might give more. After life with her,
With her sweet counsel, tender grace, large thought,
And great calm beauty, all seems trivial.
Ask me not why I love, nor count her faults;
Who ever gave a reason for his love?

Let not this day go by unconsciously;
No! let us taste it — taste it as it goes,
Not gulp it at one draught like common wine,
But taste each drop, and say, "how exquisite!"
Stay, stay with us, oh! dear and lovely day,
Would we could hold you back forever here.

What long sweet respiration of delight
In these old places, and in this old world;
How dear this villa, with its crumbling pride,
Its time-wryed balustrades, its shadowy walks
Through the thick ilexes — its fountain stairs
Down which the sheeted water leaps alive
To heap the basin where the gold-fish hang.
Not half so dear to generations gone,
To those who planned the gardens and enslaved
The free stream of the mountain here to pour,
When loosened from its prison into light,
Its mounting splendor and its cool sweet song
As unto us, who after Time hath laid
Its hand on all and given it a grace
No newness ever owned — here lie and muse.

Here walked the Falconieri in their pride
Centuries ago — here the Colonna came,
Vittoria with them — Angelo himself,
Gazing upon her as she gravely moved,
And sighing for her, while Fabrizio's sword
Clanged on the gravel — here the D'Este came,
From Tivoli where o'er dark cypresses

Their villa looks above the billowy land
Of the Campagna; — ah! how sweet their names
Sound, rousing pensive echoes in the heart.
Here woman in her first young budding grace
To manhood's earliest prime of passion pledged
The faith of innocent love, the while their hearts
Ran over into sweet Italian words —
Soft dropping vowels. They are now but dust;
But yet their imaged life re-lives in us
A charmed existence. Down such paths as these
Stole Romeo to his Juliet, when the moon
Looked at her quivering image in the cup
Of such broad fountain; — by such balustrade
Fair Beatrice, her wit scarce sheathed in Love,
Ran like a lapwing close unto the ground; —
Under the shadow of such deep green woods
Francesca read upon the fatal day
That lives in Dante's rhyme; — Petrarca walked
Alone and thoughtful through such silent paths
Enshrining Laura in his amber song —
Here Tasso roamed, and o'er such terraces
That happy group of dark-eyed women sat,
For whom Boccaccio told his charming tales.

Oh! sweet romantic memories, ye exhale
Your odorous breath amid these sylvan shades
To intoxicate the senses. Gentle forms,
Ye rise like visions here among the trees,
In fair procession. In the fountain's dim
And whispering murmur are your voices hid.

Ye speak of Love — ye summon up again
Blind, sweet sensations, feelings dreamy, faint
As the prophetic light round the young moon;
Wild hopes that overflow Life's parapets
Rise at your voice, tempered and sobered down,
And with a haze of sadness — sadness full
Of tenderest joy and not to be exchanged
For all those wilder raptures — rise again
With trains of memories, forms that are no more,
And smiles of light that pierce Thought's shadowy wood.

Ah! were ye here with whom in Childhood's days,
Or in the season of expanding thought
I roamed and dreamed and shaped a thousand vague
Delicious fancies — were ye at my side!
Yet no! in vision only could we touch
That Future which is Present now to me —
Present in Time, but ah! how sadly changed
From what we painted. Not the ocean drear,
With its blind waste of washing, weltering waves
Yawns now between us, — finer line than thought
Can ever trace, yet not to be o'er-reached,
And vaster than the widest stretch of sea,
Is drawn between your life beyond and ours.

Are these dreams nothing? are these idle hours
Loss to the soul? Believe it not, dear friend!

These fallow times enrich our choicest powers
And sweeten strength which else would grow too
hard.
We will not take the joy we do not earn,
So vain are we — and yet these idle joys
That Nature offers we can never win —
Out of her grace she gives, but not for pay.
The charm of Beauty slips away from Work.
So let us live to-day, not as the bee
Bustling and busy at our nervous toil —
(Of all God's creatures most I hate the bee,
Heartless and selfish, and intent on gain,
Armed with a sting and banging rudely round
With irritated noise among the flowers,)
But float as lazy as the butterfly
Whose idle wings beauty is glad to paint,
The brother of the rose on which he lights.
To-morrow for the pictures we shall paint —
To-morrow for the statue we shall carve —
To-day we 'll dream beneath the open sky
And take our color, as the flowers take theirs.

Hark! from the ilexes the nightingale
Begins its beating prelude, like the throbs
Of some quick heart, then pauses, then again
Bursts into fitful jets of gurgling song, —
Then beats again; and listen! rising now
To its full rapture thrills the shadowy wood
With the delirious passion of its voice;
With dizzy trills, and low, deep, tearful notes,

And hurried heaping of voluptuous tones
That blent together in one intricate maze
Of sweet inextricable melodies,
Whirl on and up, and circling lift and lift,
And burst at last in scattered showers of notes,
And leave us the sweet, silent afternoon.

ROME, *July* 5, 1852.

## UNDER THE ILEXES.

DEDICATED TO A. I. T.

Dark ilexes above, dry sward below,
O'er which the flickering sunglobes come and go;
Beyond, the swooping valley roughed by lines
Ruled by the plough between the rows of vines;
O'er yellow sunburnt slopes the olives gray
Casting their rounded shadows; far away
A stately parliament of poised stone-pines;
Dark cypresses with golden balls bestrewn,
Each rocking to the breeze its solemn cone;
Dim mountains, veiled in dreamy mystery,
Sleeping upon the pale and tender sky;
And near, with softened shades of purple brown,
By distance hushed, the peaceful mellowed town,
Domes, roofs, and towers all sleeping tranced and still —
A painted city on a painted hill.

Here let me lie and my siesta take,
And gaze about me, dreaming, half awake.

What peace is here! what rapt tranquillity! —
The far-off voices seem to lull the sense;

The cock's clear crow sounds faint and drowsily;
The sharp fly buzzing round the leafy fence;
The burning wasp, the bees that droning hum
Along the shining spires of withered grass;
The far cathedral bell's half-buried boom;
The leaves that whisper as the breezes come,
And talk a moment with them as they pass,
Break not the calm; — with half-shut dreaming eyes
I watch them, while my idle fancies stray,
Even as these noiseless yellow butterflies,
That poise on grass or flower, and drift away
Like wavering leaves in their perpetual play.
And all these sounds come vague to me and seem
Drowned in the air, like voices in a dream.
Look at this ilex-trunk's mosaic bark,
With all its myriad cracks, and seams, and squares!
See with what patient pains and happy cares
'T is painted o'er with lichens light and dark,
Rich brown, pale gray, and softest malachite,
And every hue that can the eye delight!
This moss of golden green that round it clings
Is a vast forest filled with noiseless things,
That 'neath its jungle make their secret lairs.
Here the black ant may hunt as in a park,
Here hosts of beetles come in burnished mail,
On secret errands bent from underground;
Some with vermilion corselets on their back,
Marked with black crosses, some with gold embrowned,

Some bronzed with shadowy green, some ribbed and black,
Splendid as mortal knight was never found.
Here creeps the torpid locust from his cell,
Deep at its roots, to shed his silvery shell,
Breaks the thin crust, and spreads his gauzy wings,
And in the shade his praise of summer sings.
Here, in the centre of his woven wheel,
That dimly glistening in the shadow shakes,
Hangs the fat spider, ready and aware,
Round the fierce fly that pertinacious there
Darts to and fro, his silvery coil to reel.
Here the slim dragon-fly her visit makes
On glassy vans that gleam with opal hues,
And waves her tail of green enamelled rings.
Here the black grillo burrows all day long;
And peeping forth when fall the twilight dews,
Trills to the night its little simmering song.
Here creep among the grass, at work, or game,
Swarms of strange life that scarcely own a name;
Here live, and love, and fight, and sleep, and die,
Plagued by no dreams of immortality.
World within world, the deeper that we gaze,
Life widens, death recedes, the mass inert
Moves into being; all this mould and dirt
Is living in its own mysterious ways.

Which shall we dare most wonderful to call,
The infinite great, or not less infinite small?

Puzzled I gaze upon this spiring grass
That 'neath me lies, and ask, — can aught surpass
The wonder of this life minute that moves
Beneath my hand, and struggles, suffers, loves?
Are the vast worlds that darkness shows to night,
Or day enshrouds in its abyss of light,
More strange than this that hides from human eye
In the minuteness of its mystery?

No more! the shadows shrink; the prying sun
Hath found me out. The morning 's gone — how soon!
The far cathedral bell is striking noon.
This sketch, dear Annie, is for you — half done.

## AUTUMN IN TUSCANY.

DEDICATED TO J. R. L.

These Autumn winds are growing chill,
They wander wailing o'er the hill,
And at the close-shut window cry
That summer opened lovingly;
But we can let them in no more,
And all the eve my heart is sore —
My heart is sore, I know not why.
They seem to say,
The summer day
Has past away,
And life goes with it silently.

Still o'er the mountain's darkening bar
We watch the new-born evening star,
That throbs and quivers in the sea
Of amber light — and musingly
We let our shaping fancy play
With those soft clouds of pearly gray,
That float along the silvery sky.
Ah woe! ah woe!
We all must go,
The chill winds blow,
And summer 's gone like a passing sigh.

These Autumn morns when we may stray
Through chestnut woods, where glancing play
The checkered light and shadow thrown
O'er trunk, and grass, and mossy stone,
And lie beneath some spreading tree
And feel our own felicity,
How sweet if they would never fly —
    But no! ah no!
    'T is never so!
    All good things go,
And thought pursues them with a sigh.

All day the woods are redolent
And saddened with the steamy scent
The dewy rotting leaves exhale
That heap the hollows in the vale;
Then through the bonfire's quivering gas
The landscape shakes as it would pass,
And all is sad, we know not why; —
    All seems to say
    The summer day
    Is past away,
Why linger ye to say Good-bye?

No more the fierce cicala shrills,
Only the hearthstone-cricket trills, —
The hemp-stalks pile their bleaching bones
In pyramids of skeletons,
Or clacking cradles break them where
The peasant shakes their silvery hair,

And flings them on the grass to dry.
The summer 's flown,
The leaves are strewn,
And we alone
Are lingering here to say Good-bye.

The cyclamen, alive with fears,
Smooths trembling back its harelike ears;
The frost-touched creepers bleeding fall,
And drip in crimson o'er the wall;
The rusted chestnuts shivering spill
Their bursting spine-burrs on the hill;
The day is short, soon comes the night,
And damp and chill
Along the hill
The dews distil
Under the harvest-moon's great light.

Louder at eve the river roars;
The fringed acacia paves with showers
Of golden leaves our summer path,
And all the world about us hath
A feel of sorrow — we must go;
Alas! I would not have it so,
But all things vanish from us here,
And still we sigh,
Ah why, ah why,
So swiftly fly,
Ye days that were so glad and dear?

'T is lovely still; but yet a sense
Of sadness and impermanence
Disturbs me — and this flushing grace
That mantles over Autumn's face
Is but the hectic hue, beneath
Whose beauty steals the thought of death, —
And this it is that makes us sigh.
Ah! bitter word
Too often heard,
What thoughts are stirred
Whene'er we whisper thee — Good-bye!

Death walks along my shrouded thought;
I feel him though I see him not:
His step is on the joys that grew
And waved this lovely summer through.
I fear, for life is all too fair,
And trembling ask, Ah! when? and where?
And this it is that makes me sigh;
Too sweet to last,
Ah! golden past
That fled so fast,
No future owns such witchery.

## IN THE GLEN.

HERE in this cool, secluded glen
Alone with Nature let me lie,
Where no rude voice or peering eyes of men
Disturbs its perfect peace and privacy;
Where through the swaying firs the restless breeze
Sighs softly and the murmuring torrent flows,
Singing the same low song as on it goes,
That it hath sung for countless centuries;
Now welling through the mossy rocks, now spilled
In little sparkling falls, now lingering, stilled
In brown, deep pools to hold the mirrored skies,
As brown, as clear as some fair maiden's eyes,
And filled like them with silent mysteries.
One side the shelving slopes, through which its song
The torrent sings, the firs' tall columns throng,
Spreading their dark green tops against the blue;
And on the brown, fine carpet at their feet
Long strips and flecks of sun strike glimmering through,

Where gleaming specks of insects through
them fleet.
Along the other slope green beeches spread
Their spotted canopy of light and shade,
And on the brown, transparent stream below
Their quivering, tessellated pavement throw.

Here ferns and bracken spread their plumy
spray;
Here the wild rose gropes out against the gray
Moss-cushioned rocks, and o'er the torrent
swings;
Here o'er the bank the sombre ivy strings,
And the scorned thistle bears its royal crown;
Here wild clematis stretches, wavering down;
And, 'mid a mass of tangled weeds that know
Scarcely a name, and all neglected grow,
A tribe of gracious flowers peeps smiling up:
The humble dandelion, buttercup,
And spindled gorse here show their gleaming
gold;
The bright-eyed daisy, innocently bold,
Stars the lush green; the purple malva lifts
Its spreading cup; from tufted blackberries drifts
A snow of blossoms, scenting with their breath
The summer air; and, sacred to St. John,
The magic flower that maidens cull at dawn;
And blue forget-me-nots, scarce seen beneath
The feathery grass; and the white hemlock's
face;

And all the wild, untrained, and happy race
Of Nature's children, through whose blooms the bees,
Busy for honey hovering, hum and tease.
Softened, by distance, from the woods remote,
Rings, now and then, the blackbird's liquid note;
Or the jay scolds, or far up in the sky
Trills out the lark's long, quivering melody;
Or, its melodious passion pouring out,
In the green shadow hid, the nightingale
Stills all the world to listen to its tale,
The same sweet tale that centuries past it sung
To Grecian ears, when Poesy was young;
Or the glad goldfinch tunes his tremulous throat,
Or with a sudden chirp some linnet gray
Darts up the gorge, to drink at these cool springs,
And at a glimpse of me flits swift away.

A faint, fine hum of myriad quivering wings
Fills all the air; the idle butterfly
Drifts down the glen; and through the grasses low
Creep swarms of busy creatures to and fro,
And have their loves, and joys, and strife and hate,
Intent upon a life to us unknown.
On the o'erhanging boulders glance and gleam
Quick, quivering lights reflected from the stream,
Where water-spiders poise and darting skate,
Their shadows on its dappled sand-floor thrown.

Across the boulders bare and pine-slopes brown,
Like dials of the day that passes by,
The firs' long shadow-index silently,
So silently, is ever stealing on,
We scarcely heed the unpausing flight of time
So swift and noiseless ; and some subtle spell
Seems to have lulled to sleep this shadowy dell,
As if it lay in some enchanted clime,
Haunted by dreams that never poet's rhyme
Nor music's voice to waking ears can tell.

All is so peaceful here that weary thought
Half falls asleep, nor seeks to find the key
Of the pervading, unsolved mystery
Through which we move, by which our life is wrought.
Here, magnetized by Nature, if the eye
Upglancing should discern in the soft shade
Some Dryad's form, or, where the waters braid
Their silvery windings, haply should descry
Some naked Naiad leaning on the rocks,
Her feet dropped in its basin, while her locks
She lifts from off her shoulders unafraid,
And gazes round, or looks into the cool
Tranced mirror of the softly-gleaming pool,
To see her polished limbs and bosom bare
And sweet, dim eyes and smile reflected there,
'T would scarce seem strange, but only as it were
A natural presence, natural as yon rose
That spreads its beauty careless to the air,

And knows not whence it came nor why it grows,
And just as simply, innocently there;
The sweet presiding spirit of some tree,
The soul indwelling in the murmuring brook,
Whose voice we hear, whose form we cannot see,
On whom, at last, 't is given us to look;
As if dear Nature for a moment's space
Lifted her veil and met us face to face.

Such Grecian thought is false to our rude sense,
That naught believes, or feels, or hears, or sees
Of what the world in happier days of Greece
Felt with a feeling gentle and intense.
We are divorced from Nature; our dull ears
Catch not the music of the finer spheres,
See not the spirits that in Nature dwell
In leafy groves through which they glancing look,
In the dim music of the singing brook,
And lurk half hidden and half audible.
To us the world is dead. The soul of things,
The life that haunts us with imaginings,
That lives, breathes, throbs in all we hear and see,
The charm, the secret hidden everywhere,
Evades all reason, spurns philosophy,
And scorns by boasting science to be tracked.
Hunt as we will all matter to the end,
Life flits before it; last, as first, we find
Naught but dead structure and the dust of fact;
The infinite gap we cannot apprehend,
The somewhat that is life — the informing mind.

Even here in this still glen I cannot flee
The secret that torments us everywhere.
In cloud, sky, rock, tree, man, its mystery
Pursues us ever to the same despair.
What says this brook, that ever murmuring flows?
What whisper these tall trees that talk alway?
What secret hides the perfume of this rose?
What is it that dear Nature strives to say?
Our sense is dull, we cannot understand
The voice we hear — but, oh! so far away
As from a world beyond our night and day,
A dream-voice from some dim, imagined land.
Here dreaming on in idle, tranquil mood,
Lulled by the tune that Nature softly plays,
Our wandering thoughts, by some strange spell subdued,
Are calmed and stilled, and all seems sweet and good,
And she our mother seems, that on her breast,
With murmuring voice, and gentle, whispering ways,
Hushes her child within her arms to rest;
And, though the child scarce knoweth what she says,
He feels her presence gently o'er him brood.

And yet, O Nature, thou no mother art,
But for a moment, like to this, at best
A stern step-mother thou, that to thy heart

Claspest thy child by some caprice possessed,
Then, careless of his fate, abandonest,
Flinging him off from thee to wail and cry,
All heedless if he live or if he die.
Is it for us thou, reckless, squanderest
Thy beauty with such wide and lavish waste?
For us? Ah! no; were we all swept away,
What wouldst thou care? No change upon thy face
Would answer to our sorrow or disgrace,
Alike to those who love, laugh, weep, or pray.
Glares not the sun impertinent upon
Our darkest griefs? Do not the glad flowers blow,
The unpausing hours, days, seasons, come and go,
Despite our joys and loves? To all our woe
Have we a sympathetic answer ever won?
Are thy stones softer on the path we tread
Because our thoughts are journeying with the dead?
Is not this world, with all its beauty, rife
With endless war, death preying upon life,
Perpetual horror, pain, crime, discord, strife,
Night chasing day, storms driving sunshine out?
And yet through all impassive, stern, and cold,
With folded hands, which hide whate'er they hold,
Like Nemesis, thou standest, speaking not,
Before the gates of Fate; and, if they ope,
To show one glimpse beyond, one gleam of hope,

'T is but an instant; then the door is shut;
And, poor, blind creatures, here astray we grope,
Stretching our hands out where we cannot see,
Through the dark paths of this world's mystery.

And yet, why spoil the day with thoughts like these?
Better to lie beneath these whispering trees
And take the joy the moment gives, and feel
The glad, pure day, the gently lifting breeze
That steals their odors from the unconscious flowers,
Nor seek what Nature never will reveal,
The hidden secret of our destinies.
Let all go — whate'er it is it is,
And, come what will, this day, at least, is ours.
My hour is gone, dear glen, and now farewell.
Here you the self-same song, bright brook, will sing;
Here you, dark firs, the self-same tale will tell,
Mysterious, to the low wind whispering,
How many a summer day to other ears,
When I am gone, beyond all doubts, hopes, fears,
Beyond all sights and sounds of this fair world,
Into the dim beyond, in time to come,
Will many a dreamer sit for many an hour,
Lulled by your murmur, and the insects' hum,
And many a poet praise you. Clasped and curled

Beside these rocks, and plucking some chance
flower,
Will many a pair of lovers linger, dumb
With love's too much for utterance, all too weak
The charm they feel, the joy they own, to speak.
Here wandering from the noisy city's maze,
How many an idle, casual visitor
Thy beauty with a careless tone will praise,
And turn away without one true heart-stir.
Here the dull woodman, thinking but of gain,
Heedless of any Dryad's shriek of pain,
Will fell with ringing axe this living wood;
And here some gentle child, o'er whom the
dream
And lingering lights of former being brood,
Perchance may meet some Naiad at this stream,
By whom her language shall be understood,
And here together they will talk and play, —
And many a secret she will strive to tell
That here she learns, and all the world will say,
Laughing: "Dear child, this is not credible."
Ah Heaven! we know so much who nothing
know!
Only to children and in poets' ears,
At whom the wise world wondering smiles and
sneers,
Secrets of God are whispered here below.
Only to them, and those whose gentle heart
Is opened wide to list for Beauty's call,
Will Nature lean to whisper the least part

Of that great mystery which circles all.
The wise, dull world, with solid facts content,
Laughs at all dreamers, deeming nothing good
Save what is touched, seen, handled, understood.
Well, let it laugh! To me the firmament
Is more than gleaming lights; more than mere wood
These leafy groves; and more these murmuring streams
Than running waters. This wide, vaporous sky,
Painted by morning, fired by sunset gleams,
These winds that breathe around this swinging world,
This restless ocean, moaning constantly,
These storms across the shuddering forests whirled,
The season's still processions, day and night,
That each the other silently pursues,
Sure and unchanging in their even flight,
And all these changing shows and forms and hues
Not for mere use were given, nor mere delight.
Beauty is theirs and power, and, more, a fine
Dim mystery shrouds them man can ne'er divine.
Harvests that sweeten life and thought they bear
Imponderable, exquisite, and rare,
That take the spirit with a sweet surprise.
Dreams haunt them, intimations, prophecies,
Glad lessons, adumbrations, spirit gleams,

That, when the loving heart evokes them, rise.
Others may reap their solid facts ; for me,
I am content to gather inwardly
Their silent harvest of poetic dreams.

## PRIMAVERA.

THE Spring has passed this way — Look! where she trod
The daring crocus sprang up through the sod
To greet her coming with glad heedlessness,
Scarce waiting to put on its leafy dress,
But bright and bold in its brave nakedness —
And further on — mark! — o'er this gentle rise
She must have paused, for soft anemones
Are trembling to the wind, couched low among
The fresh green grasses that so lush have sprung
Where the hid runnel with low tinkling tongue
Babbles its secret troubles — Here she stopped
A longer while, and on this rising sweep,
As pensively she lingered, see, she dropped
A knot of love-sick violets from her breast,
Which, ere she threw them down, she must have kissed,
For still the fragrance of her breath they keep —
And look! — here, too, her passing robes have brushed,
Where this white leafless almond faintly blushed
To greet her — and in blossoms burst as she
Swept by it gladsomely and gracefully.

Where is she now? Gone! Vain it were to try
To overtake her. Here then let us lie
On this green slope and weave a wreath, and sing
With our best skill the joyous praise of Spring,
Thankful for these sweet gifts she left behind —
Flowers, grass, and showery perfume of the wind.

Pursuit is useless — she like all things fair
Will not be hunted down into her lair
And caught and prisoned. Let us not be rude,
Nor seek into her presence to intrude,
But praise her in the distance! — then perchance
She may not flee away with wingèd feet,
But pause and backward cast a favoring glance,
And waft a fragrance to us rare and sweet —
Too eager, we our present joy may miss
In the vain chase of an imagined bliss,
The Ideal joy no human hand can seize,
The dream that ever lures and vanishes.

Rude blustering March has gone to sleep to-day,
And left the world for Spring therein to play
And wander as it will through grove and dell
To work her sweet and gentle miracle
And bring the dead to life. — But who can tell
When jealous March may wake and wreak his wrath
Upon the dear intruder, blind her path
With stinging sleet, pelt her with rattling hail,
Drive the swollen torrent madly down the vale,
Scatter her blossoms, blast her tender crops,

Roar up the hill-sides, grasping by their tops
The shuddering trees, and screaming through the grove
Distort with passion its calm face of love?
Should he but wake and with a voice of dread
Come trampling on the thunderous clouds o'erhead
To shake the world and flash his startling blades
Of lightning out, — swift as in Enna's vale
When Proserpine slow loitering through the glades
Beheld black Pluto with his face of bale
And dropped her flowers and fled, — so in affright
Spring shuddering would turn and flee from sight.

But truce to idle fears, — in these blue skies
No thunder threatens, — all is calm and still
As a child sleeping, and this shadowy hill
Is full of glancing lights and perfumed breath,
And the green springing grass is fresh beneath
Our wandering feet. Not even Paradise
Was sweeter, fairer, ere the thought of death
Had darkened o'er it, and the world was new,
And Love without a fear its gladness knew.

The day is passing — let us own its spell
Calm as the trees that feel within them swell
The secret thrill and currents of the spring,
And outward yearn in leaves and blossoming —
Content to take what nature freely gives, —
Love for life's blossoms, gentle thoughts for leaves.

# LYRICS.

## IO VICTIS!

I SING the hymn of the conquered, who fell in the Battle of Life, —
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died overwhelmed in the strife;
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the resounding acclaim
Of nations was lifted in chorus, whose brows wore the chaplet of fame,
But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary, the broken in heart,
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and desperate part;
Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose hopes burned in ashes away,
From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped at, who stood at the dying of day
With the wreck of their life all around them, unpitied, unheeded, alone,
With Death swooping down o'er their failure, and all but their faith overthrown.

While the voice of the world shouts its chorus, — its pæan for those who have won;

While the trumpet is sounding triumphant, and high to the breeze and the sun
Glad banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying feet
Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors, I stand on the field of defeat,
In the shadow, with those who are fallen, and wounded, and dying, and there
Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knotted brows, breathe a prayer,
Hold the hand that is helpless, and whisper, "They only the victory win,
Who have fought the good fight, and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight, — if need be, to die."

Speak, History! who are Life's victors? Unroll thy long annals, and say,
Are they those whom the world called the victors — who won the success of a day?
The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans, who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges or Socrates? Pilate or Christ?

## SUNRISE.

SUNRISE! Sunrise! See!
Into the silent field of the dawn,
Where the mountain's clear sharp line is drawn,
The light mounts steadily.
While below in many a chasm deep,
The mists of night still lingering creep,
And the lower slopes are half asleep,
And dimly dreaming, —
And at last, look! look! how startlingly
Into the world of the open sky,
Where the light before was so pale and tender,
And earth and air were still and aware
With a silent expectation,
Sails the sudden Sun —
With its banners of clouds above it streaming,
Golden and purple, and rose and gray and dun,
Flooding the world with its splendor,
And gladdening all creation —
And Day — Day — Day, has begun.

There 's a rustle through leagues of forest — the ocean stirs,
Quivering with joy and light —

The last star swoons and dies — only the firs,
And the sombre cedars, and cypresses tall,
Solemn, dark, and funereal,
Remember the vanished night.
Day and life return — and the earth rejoices,
The air is alive with a murmur of busy voices;
There 's the low of a myriad herds,
Feeding on endless meadows, —
There 's the joy of a myriad birds,
Darting through leafy shadows, —
There 's the quiver of endless leaves,
That gleam at the day's returning, —
And the breath of a world of flowers goes up
Like incense unto the morning,
As spreading their petals they shake from each cup
The dewy light it imprisons —
The life of a myriad insect-wings
In the wet grass buzzes and dizzens.
The spider from twig to twig has swung
His glimmering wheel of silken thread, —
And the gossamer over the grasses hung
His awning diamonded.
The wild geese drop from the thin clear height,
Where all night long they have held their flight,
And settle on lake and mere;
Up springs the lark, and, lost in the light,
Carols his rapture — out of sight
Thrilling the atmosphere.
A thousand sails on the heaving sea

By a sudden hue of rose are struck, —
In a thousand cities shaft and spire
Are quivering pointed with golden fire, —
From a thousand homes into the sky
The thin gray column of rising smoke
Is stealing silently.
The jar of the world of men begins, —
The reaper and sower afield are going,
The busy factory clacks and dins,
The mill-wheel over its sluices whirls,
Shattered in spray of diamond and pearls
The torrent's overflowing.
There 's a ring of wagons on valley and hill, —
From a thousand farms with clarion shrill
The strutting cock is crowing.
There is neighing and barking, and bleating and lowing,
Chirp and chatter, and stir and clatter,
And an infinite humming and whirring, —
For the throbbing world is alive again,
And its pulse is beating in every vein
With the strength of a mighty stirring;
Night with its shadows of death is done.
The great new wondrous day has begun,
And mountains and valleys, and seas and strands,
Forests and rivers and torrents free,
Startled, arouse and clap their hands,
The glad new miracle to see,
And shout, "The Sun! The Sun!"

All the world is alive and waking
To hail the great new day that is breaking.
Sharp through the western forest's tangled covers
The hunter's rifle cracks,
Where the black bear prowls, and the poising eagle hovers,
And the beaver his mud-dam packs.
There rings the pioneer's axe, and the forest giant
That has caught the day's first flash
On its topmost crest for a full long century, quivers —
Shudders — and falls with a crash.
Far in the south, through thick Brazilian tangles
The painted parrot screams,
And the boa coiled on its branches droops and dangles,
And the Paradise-bird like a living flash of splendor
Through the burning summer streams.
Over the western prairies herds of buffaloes
Crowded and thundering rush, —
The lion and tiger on sandy African deserts
That all night long have ranged for their prey,
Satiate now at the coming of day,
Are stealing to cave and bush, —
The ostrich is whirring, half running, half flying,
On sultry Australian plains, —

The hippopotamus lumbers along to the river
Crashing among the canes, —
The soft-eyed spotted giraffe his tall neck stretches
The low wet branches to browse, —
The ponderous elephants lift their trunks, and trumpet
And shake the earth as they rouse.
From seething Sumatra and tropic Madagascar,
From Borneo's groves of spice,
To the glacial fields where the white bear basks and souses
And blunders along the ice, —
From the sultry Indian Sea to the cold Atlantic,
As on thy glory comes, —
From the orient chambers of thy early rising,
O'er Europe's plains and homes, —
From the Himalayas on to the Alps — and onward
To the Rocky Mountains, that rise
O'er the fair Pacific, peak to peak out-calling,
Flushed as the glad news flies,
Hail thee, O glorious Sun! all the earth hails thee,
And the stir and the strife and the strain
Of living begins — and the world that was sleeping and dreaming
Rouses and quivers again.

Let trumpet and pipe and voice and song

Echo unto the skies!
Let chorus and hymn thy praise prolong,
O glorious Sun! that comest again
With thy ever-new surprise.
O splendor of earth and life that gives
Joy and beauty to all that lives
And daily the world renews, —
O fountain of light and color that flings
O'er the darkest and dullest of earthly things
Thy glad transfiguring hues, —
O glory of earth and sea and sky,
Life of a myriad worlds on high,
Soul of the universe, light of its eye,
Who shall his voice refuse,
To swell the chorus that evermore
Is shouted from flashing peaks that dare
The cold thin depths of the breathless air
Thy earliest glance to see, —
To the crawling foam that fringes the shore
Murmuring impatiently?
From the tremulous forest that uplifts
Its listening tops, while the morning breeze
With its news from afar with a whisper sifts
And thy glorious coming promises,
To the humblest of weeds and grasses low,
Where the clear cool stream with a murmurous flow,
Is talking and running to catch a sight
Of thy first sweet gleam of morning light,
To tell unto all below.

All, all are joining with one glad tone, —
All, all are chanting their song as one, —
From the bass of the thunderous avalanche
And the cataract's dizzy booming
To the whisper fine of the quivering breeze
That hurries through myriad leagues of trees,
And the insects infinite humming.
The Sun! The Sun! The Sun — The King!
The King of the World is coming!
Fling forth your banners — shout and sing,
Until the whole wide universe ring
With a vast and joyous welcoming,
For the King, the King is coming!

## MOONRISE.

Night, beloved night!
She is coming — she soon will come;
Slowly is paling the dying light;
Twilight has lost its bloom,
And a serious hush steals silently
Over the shadowy Earth, —
While faint in the delicate air on high
The first new star has birth.

Against the twilight, their shoulders bare,
The mountains are turning as to sleep;
And one by one from their chambers deep,
Where from the peering search they hid
Of the day's rude gaze and opened lid,
A myriad worlds come forth.

The riotous day is gone
With his cymbals clashing, his bright spears flashing,
His tumult and rout, his Bacchanal's shout,
His gladness and madness, and laughter and raving; —
His banners and thyrsi no longer are waving;

His chorus and dances and singing are done, —
The noisy array has hurried away
And vanished below the horizon's rim
Into worlds beyond, — and his gonfalons gay
Of sunset glories are dim and grey,
And have all forgotten him —
For night, with its shadowy silent presence,
Is stealing on; —
And under its spell so calm and serious
The wondering world stands still,
And a feeling — vague, intense, mysterious —
Is brooding o'er valley and hill.

The stars in their blue unfathomed tomb
Gleam far and bright, —
They are waiting the coming of the moon,
The Regent of the Night.
Nor long they await — for look — serene
Above the hills revealed,
Large and majestic in her mien,
Into the clear, expectant sky
She lifts her gleaming shield —
And with a pensive peaceful grace
Takes queenlike there her silent place,
And looks o'er all the enchanted world
With calm pathetic face.
All own her gentle influence,
So tender, so intense;
And over all a breath of prayer

Floats like a feeling through the air,
And soothes the soul and sense.

Along the river's course the slow mists cling,
As murmuring on it swells.
In the dark grass a myriad grilli ring
Their chimes of tiny bells.
From rugged mountain-steeps that dark and bare
Shrouded in shadow dream,
Voices of white cascades, whose veils out-stream
And hang upon the air,
Chant to the Night their praises as they go
To join the torrent hurrying hoarse below
O'er its gray boulders tossed.
The soft wind whispering sings its mountain song
As slow it drives the low white clouds along,
Or murmurs through the black platoons of pines,
Whose serried ranks together push
Their tall uplifted spears, and rush
Up the sheer sides of Alps and Apennines, —
Or tremulous breathes o'er many a peaceful slope
Of gracious Italy,
Where in festoons the swaying vineyards droop,
And the gray olives up the hillsides troop —
A ghostly company,
Pallid and faint, as they had only known
The moon for friend — and in its light had grown

A dream the vales and hills and meadows haunts, —
Earth sleeping turns and sighs, — the ocean pants,
And weary, flings itself upon the breast
Of the broad beach, scarce knowing what it wants,
Stirred by a strange unrest;
The sky's deep dome is filled with mysteries dim
And tremulous throbs, — the swift and wheeling spheres
With music thrill, too fine for human ears,
And Nature, with its myriad voices, chants
To thee its faint night hymn.

Nor Nature only, — every living thing
Thy influence feels, and all of harsh and rude,
Touched by thy sweet and gentle visiting,
Grows peaceful and subdued.
In the dark woods the hidden nightingale,
With rapturous trills, and sudden passion-throbs,
And liquid bursts, and low recurrent sobs,
Repeats his love-lorn tale.
The plaintive cry of the sad whippoorwill
Is heard along the hill.
The leathern bat wheels round in noiseless flight
Across the glimmering and uncertain light, —
And mournfully afar the feathery owl

Hoots in the ear of night.
From many a pond, where on its green-paved floor
Of tessellated leaves the lily sleeps,
While the pale willow drooping o'er it weeps,
His guttural bass the frog sings o'er and o'er.
From out the tall dark silhouetted tower,
At intervals, with deep and solemn stroke,
The church bells strike the quarters and the hour.
There comes a bleating from the folded flock,
A tinkle of faint bells, —
From the dim fields the voice of country folk,
Talking and laughing, swells;
And now and then the bay
Of some enchanted watch-dog far away,
That feels night's influence, and cannot say
What stirs him so,
Is heard lamenting, — or some wakened cock
Crows out a drowsy crow.
But all these sounds and voices seem
To melt away into the tender dream
That haunts the air,
And soothe the silence which were else too deep
For heart to bear.

All sleep! The tired world sleeps!
A quiet infinite
The soul of man and nature steeps,
And smooths the brow of night.

The weary ox lays off his yoke, —
The dog hunts in his dream alone, —
The woodman wields no more his stroke, —
The beggar, 'neath his ragged cloak,
On the cold pavement thrown,
No longer heeds the world's dark frown,
No longer hungers, racked with pains,
But roams along Elysian plains
And wears a monarch's crown.
A myriad mortals lay their head
Upon oblivion's poppied bed,
By peaceful slumber blest,
And all day's busy toils and cares,
And all the hard world's strain and stress,
And all its tortuous snarls and snares
Are lifted from their breast, —
As lapped in calm unconsciousness
They sleep — they rest.

But Love awakes: O silent moon,
Upon how many a happy pair
That breathe this silvery tranquil air,
Serene thou lookest down!
As wandering, blest by Life's best boon,
Through many a lane and shadowy grove
They lingering talk — or pausing dream,
And strive to tell their love;
While following them, now bright now dim,
The listening stars above
Through the o'erhanging tree-tops swim

And with them pause — or move.
Their bliss intense, their thrill of sense
That words can never half express,
Thou seest as they wander on, —
His clasping arm around her thrown,
She trembling in his fond caress, —
And all the air is still to hear,
And all the heavens above,
The sweet low broken utterances,
The silences of Love.
The nightingale that knows to sing
Love's passion and Love's pain,
Cries Love — Love — Love — interpreting
Their thrill of heart and brain.

And sorrow wakes — and in despair
Looks up, O night, to thee
And wails — "Oh where are they, oh where,
Whom Death hath torn from me?
Speak — speak, O night — O heaven, declare
From thine infinity."
And thou — what answerest thou, O night,
O boundless tremulous air,
O moon, O stars — to that wild cry,
To that impassioned prayer?
Nothing! In calm serenity,
Unmoved thou standest there,
Deaf — silent — cold and pitiless
To all we have to bear.
No! no! the tears of passion past,

Thou givest us thy boon at last.
Thou sayest — "Come to me and weep;" —
Thou givest thy beloved sleep;
Thou summonest again the form
That death hath snatched away,
The glad lost voice, the body warm,
The animate dear clay,
The dream at least of all that was
Denied to us by day.

O Night of grand repose!
O silent serious Night!
Beside thy pathos infinite
How vain are Daylight's shows!
Thine is the grand dim realm of dream,
Thine the mysterious power whose spell
Leads Fancy on beyond the extreme
Of this world's possible.
Thine the soft touch that charms the waking sense,
And woos the troubled soul to confidence.
To thee our secret woes we tell,
To thee our inmost being bare,
With thee our deepest feelings share,
Mother divine, ineffable.
Our hopes, our loves, that in the pride
Of busy daylight are repressed —
Our doubts, remorses, hidden fears,
That gnaw within the breast;
To thee, great mother, we confide

And on thy bosom shed our tears,
As thy great arms thou openest wide
To give us rest.

O Night — a secret prophecy
Thou whisperest beneath thy breath
Of that vast dim infinity,
Where broods the silent shadow — Death.
Listening I seem to hear thee say, —
"As I from out the body steal
For few brief hours the soul away,
My passing dream-world to reveal;
So my dark Brother, when your eyes
He in his endless sleep shall close,
Shall bear you — far beyond the woes
Of this short life — to the repose
Of an eternal Paradise."

## COMPANIONS ON THE ROAD.

Life's milestones, marking year on year,
Pass ever swifter as we near
The final goal, the silent end
To which our fated footsteps tend.
A year once seemed a century,
Now like a day it hurries by,
And doubts and fears our hearts oppress,
And all the way is weariness.

Ah me! how glad and gay we were,
Youth's sap in all our veins astir,
When long ago with spirits high,
A happy careless company,
We started forth — when everything
Wore the green glory of the spring,
And all the fair wide world was ours,
To gather as we would its flowers!

Then, Life almost eternal seemed,
And Death a dream so vaguely dreamed,
That in the distance scarce it threw
A cloud-shade on the mountains blue,
That rose before us soft and fair,

Clothed in ideal hues of air,
To which we meant in after-time,
Strong in our manhood's strength, to climb.

How all has changed! Years have gone by,
And of that joyous company
With whom our youth first journeyed on,
Who — who are left? Alas, not one!
Love earliest loitered on the way,
Then turned his face and slipped away;
And after him with footsteps light
The fickle Graces took their flight,
And all the careless Joys that lent
Their revelry and merriment
Grew silenter, and, ere we knew,
Had smiled their last and said "adieu."

Hope faltering then with doubtful mind,
Began to turn and look behind,
And we, half questioning, were fain
To follow with her back again;
But Fate still urged us on our way
And would not let us pause or stay.
Then to our side with plaintive eye,
In place of Hope came Memory,
And murmured of the Past, and told
Dear stories of the days of old,
Until its very dross seemed gold —
And Friendship took the place of Love,
And strove in vain to us to prove

That Love was light and insincere —
Not worth a man's regretful tear.

Ah! all in vain — grant 't was a cheat,
Yet no voice ever was so sweet —
No presence like to Love's, who threw
Enchantment over all we knew;
And still we listen with a sigh,
And back, with fond tears in the eye,
We gaze to catch a glimpse again
Of that dear face — but all in vain.

Preach not, O stern Philosophy!
Naught we can have, and naught we see,
Will ever be so pure, so glad,
So beautiful, as what we had.

Our steps are sad — our steps are slow —
Nothing is like the long ago.
Gone is the keen, intense delight —
The perfume faint and exquisite —
The glory and the effluence
That haloed the enraptured sense,
When Faith and Love were at our side,
And common Life was deified.

Our shadows that we used to throw
Behind us, now before us grow;
For once we walked towards the sun,—
But now, Life's full meridian done,

They forward stretch upon our way
Still lengthening with the passing day —
While in their growing gloom we move
Further from Youth and Joy and Love.
A chill is in the air — no more
Our thoughts with joyous impulse soar,
But creep along the level way,
Waiting the closing of the day.
The Future holds no wondrous prize
This side Death's awful mysteries;
Beyond, what waits for us, who knows?
New Life, or infinite repose?

## "DE MORTUIS."

"Manibus date lilia plenis
Purpureos spargam flores, animamque . . .
His saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani munere."

Oh come, let us haste to his grave, let us scatter
rich garlands of flowers!
We gave him scant honor while living; faint reti-
cent praises were ours
For his genius, his virtues, his courage, — but
now his quick spirit hath fled:
O'er his tomb wreaths of roses and laurels and
bays let us strew to him dead.
Ay, now, when all weeping and praising are ut-
terly vain, let us weep!
Let us praise him ungrudgingly now that, un-
conscious, he sleeps his last sleep.

Will he heed what we say? — Will he hear us
and see us? Ah no! 't is too late!
We are always too late with our praises and
pæans, — delaying, we wait,
Till Death shrouds the windows and darkens
life's warm breathing house with its pall,
And in vain, to the tenant departed, Love, Friend-
ship, or Calumny call.

Ah! then we arouse in our griefs, ah! then, and
then only, the meed
That was due to the warm living spirit we give
to the cold senseless dead.

For our brother, while here he is striving and
moving along the world's ways,
We have only harsh judgments, stern counsel,
half-uttered affections, cold praise.
Our cheer of full-hearted approval, our frank,
quick applause we deny;
Envy, Malice, and Jealousy, Calumny, all the
world's hounds in full cry
Unrelenting pursue him — while Friendship
barks low in the rear of the race,
Reluctant, perhaps, at his faults and his frailties,
till Death ends the chase.

Ah! then all his virtues, his merits shine forth;
all the charms that he owned
Rise up unobscured in their beauty, all frailties
and faults are atoned.
All the good is remembered and pondered, the
bad swept away out of sight,
And in death we behold him transfigured, and
robed in memorial light.
We lament when lamenting is useless, we praise
when all praises are vain,
And then, turning back and forgetting, begin the
same sad work again.

Ah! why did we stint to him living our gift?
Were we poor? Had we naught, —
Not a wreath, not a flower, — for our friend
to whose grave we such tribute have
brought?
Ah, no! the largess of the heart that had
strengthened and gladdened his soul
We refused him, and proffered him only the
critic's poor miserly dole.
Still we meant to be just, so we claim, though
the judgment was cold that we gave.
Was our justice then better than love? — Come,
say! as you stand by his grave.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

Upon the cherry-bough the blackbird sings
His careless, happy song,
As 'mid the rubied fruit he tilting swings,
Heedless of Right or Wrong.

No Future taunts him with its fears or hopes,
No cares his Present fret;
The Past for him no dismal vista opes
Of useless, dark regret.

Ah! how I envy him, as there he sings
His glad unthinking strain,
Untroubled by the sad imaginings
That haunt man's plotting brain!

All orchards are his home; no work or care
Compels him here to stay;
His is the world — the breathing, open air —
The glorious summer day.

Below, Earth blossoms for him; and above,
Heaven smiles in boundless blue;
Joy is in all things, and the song of Love
Thrills his whole being through.

From bough to bough its gay and transient guest
Is free to come and go
Where'er the whim invites, where'er the best
Of juicy blackhearts grow.

His are their sunny sides, that through and through
He stabs with coral bill;
And his the happiness man never knew,
That conscience cannot kill.

Ah! we who boast we are the crown of things
Like him are never glad;
By doubts and dreams and dark self-questionings
We stand besieged and sad.

What know we of that rare felicity
The unconscious blackbird knows,
That no misgiving spoils; that frank and free
From merely living grows?

Haggard Repentance ever dogs our path;
The foul fiend Discontent
Harries the spirit, and the joys it hath
Are but a moment lent.

The riddle of our Life we cannot guess;
From toil to toil we haste,
And in our sweetest joy some bitterness
Of secret pain we taste.

Ah! for an hour at least, when bold and free
In being's pure delight,
Loosed from the cares that clog humanity,
The soul might wing its flight!

Then, blackbird, we might sing the perfect song
Of Life and Love with thee,
Where no regret nor toil, nor fear of Wrong,
Nor doubt of Right should be.

## LOVE AND DEATH.

Since Death must come, now let it come to me —
Now, while my soul with Love's felicity
Is brimmed to overflowing, — naught on earth
Again so dear, so exquisite can be.

Now, with thy strong arms round me, thy divine,
Deep, silent eyes down gazing into mine,
That seem to draw my soul forth from the deep,
Far inner Life, that I to thee resign.

So let me die, — after love's perfect bliss,
After the rapture of an hour like this,
How can I sink to common trivial joys?
No! rather seal my Life with one more kiss.

Take thou my very, very soul from me
Here through my lips, and draw me unto thee,
My best, my dearest! It is heaven enough
Here in thy arms forever more to be.

## AUTUMN.

'T is the golden gleam of an autumn day,
With the soft rain raining as if in play;
And a tender touch upon everything,
As if autumn remembered the days of spring.

In the listening woods there is not a breath
To shake their gold to the sward beneath;
And a glow as of sunshine upon them lies,
Though the sun is hid in the shadowed skies.

The cock's clear crow from the farmyard comes,
The muffled bell from the belfry booms,
And faint and dim, and from far away,
Come the voices of children in happy play.

O'er the mountains the white rain draws its veil,
And the black rooks, cawing, across them sail,
While nearer the swooping swallows skim
O'er the steel-gray river's fretted brim.

No sorrow upon the landscape weighs,
No grief for the vanished summer days,
But a sense of peaceful and calm repose
Like that which age in its autumn knows.

The spring-time longings are past and gone,
The passions of summer no longer are known,
The harvest is gathered, and autumn stands
Serenely thoughtful with folded hands.

Over all is thrown a memorial hue,
A glory ideal the real ne'er knew;
For memory sifts from the past its pain,
And suffers its beauty alone to remain.

With half a smile and with half a sigh
It ponders the past that has hurried by;
Sees it, and feels it, and loves it all,
Content it has vanished beyond recall.

O glorious autumn, thus serene,
Thus living and loving all that has been!
Thus calm and contented let me be
When the autumn of age shall come to me.

## TO VICTOR.

### A LOST ODE OF HORACE.

Nor I, nor thou, with all our seeking, know
Whither, when life is over, we shall go,
  Nor what awaits us on that farther shore,
Hid from our eyes by Acheron's dark flow.

We only know — and this we must endure —
That Death waits for us, whom no prayer or lure
  Can move or change; towards whose outstretched arms
Each moment onward drives us, silent, sure.

What he conceals behind that veil he draws
We know not, Victor; but his shadow awes
  This life of ours, and in the very height
Of joy and love he bids us shuddering pause.

Virtue avails us not, nor wealth, nor power,
To stay one moment the appointed hour.
  Marcellus, Cæsar, Virgil, all have gone, —
The fatal sickle reaps grain, bud, and flower.

Where are they now? Upon some unknown
strand
Shall we again behold them, clasp their hand,
And, untormented by the ills of life,
Renew our friendship, and together stand?

Or, when the end is reached, and come it must,
Shall we, despite the hope in which we trust,
Feel nothing more, nor love, nor joy, nor pain,
But be at last mere mute, insensate dust?

If so, then virtue is a lying snare.
Let us fill high the bowl, drown sullen care,
Reap the earth's joys and all the joys of sense,
And of Life's bounty seize our fullest share.

The Gods forbid the curious human eye
Into the Future's mystery to spy.
They give us hour by hour, and scarcely that;
For, ere the hour is measured, we may die.

But if thou goest before me where no speech,
No word of friendship, no warm grasp, can reach,
Let me not linger. May the pitying Gods
Send the same final summons unto each!

Whether stern Death reach out his hand to bless
Or sweep us down to blank, dire nothingness —
Whate'er may come, together let us go
Where, at the worst, we shall escape life's stress.

## A MOMENT.

How long would you love me? A lifetime?
Ah, that is too long; let us say
A moment. Life's best 's but a moment, and
life itself scarcely a day.

Perhaps you might love me that moment; perhaps, while you quaffed
From life's brimming cup, with your sweet face turned up, love's exquisite draught;

All the spirit insatiate thirsting its sweetness to drain,
And a hurry of rapture swift rushing through heart and through brain;

All being condensed to a drop, all the soul, all the sense,
Interfused as by fire, intermingled and throbbing with passion intense;

Just one moment of Life's culmination, its waves' utmost height,
While it lifts its green cavern of opal all sun-fringed, in quivering light; —

Its foam-rose that topples and spreads at the
crest of the Fountain's full stress,
That the impulse that lifts cannot hold, that dies
of its very excess;

Just one rapturous moment, while love you in-
haled like the soul of a flower,
For a breath space, an indrawing breath space,
that words have no power

At their best to express, so divine, so enchanting,
its soul-piercing scent,
Thrilling through all the nerves, but at last in a
sigh to be breathed out and spent;

Just one moment, no longer; and then, all the
strength and desire
Faded out, all the passion exhausted, naught left
of the fire

But the sullen, gray, desolate ashes, — oh, then,
would you cling to me? Say,
Would you love me, or hate me, or scorn me,
and ruthlessly fling me away?

Who knows? Love and hate are so near, joy and
pain, ice and fire, hope and fear,
That I doubt, the next moment, *this* moment so
tender, so perfect, so dear, —

This maddening moment I know, let the next
what it chooses reveal;
'T is enough that you love me this moment, — let
Fate, as she will, spin her wheel,

Weave her web, cast her net, unto grief or despair make us prey;
This is mine, this is ours, and, once given, can never be taken away.

What though, from our dream when we wake, our love a mere folly may seem?
What is life at the best but a sleep? what is love but a dream?

## AFTER MANY DAYS.

Yes, dear, I remember those old days,
And oh, how charming they were!
I doubt — no, I know that no others to come
Will ever such feelings stir.
We had only been married a few months,
And love, like a delicate haze,
Veiled in beauty the trivial doings,
The commonest facts of those days.

Life was all smiling before us,
And nature was smiling around;
Spring hovering near us caressed us,
And joy with its aureole crowned;
'Mid the flowers and the trees in blossom,
Afar from the world we dwelt,
And the air was sweet with a thousand odors,
And the world like a full rose smelt.

In the morning I used to leave you,
And that was the only pain; —
Through the grass with its dewdrops diamonded
We walked down the shadowy lane,
And as far as the gate you went with me,

And there, with a kiss we said
Good-bye ; and you lingering watched me,
And smiled and nodded your head,

And waved your handkerchief to me,
And I constantly turned to see
If you still were there, and my daily work
Seemed a cruel necessity ;
The last turn took you away from me,
As on to my task I went,
But your face all day looked up from the page,
As over my book I bent.

And when day was over, how gladly
I rushed from the dusty town!
As I opened the gate, I whistled,
And there was your fluttering gown
As you ran with a smile to meet me,
With your brown curls tossing free,
And your arms were thrown about my neck
As I clasped you close to me.

And the birds broke into a chorus
Of twittering joy and love,
And the golden sunset flamed in the trees,
And gladdened the sky above,
As up the lane together
We slowly loitered along,
While love in our hearts was singing
Its young and exquisite song.

The blood through our veins ran swiftly,
Like a stream of lambent fire;
Our thoughts were all winged, and our spirits
Uplifted with sweet desire.
My joy, my love, my darling,
You made the whole world sweet,
And the very ground seemed beautiful
That you pressed beneath your feet.

What was there more to ask for,
As I held you closely there,
And you smiled with those gentle, tender eyes,
And I breathed the scent of your hair?
Stop, Time, and speed no further!
Nothing, as long as we live,
Can give such a radiance of delight,
As one hour of love can give.

The lilacs were filling with fragrance
The air along the lane,
And I never smell the lilacs
But those hours revive again;
And oft, though long years have vanished,
One whiff of their scent will bring
Those old dear days, with their thrill of life,
When love was in blossoming.

Time has gone on despite us,
We both have grown old and gray,
And love itself has grown old and staid,

But it never has flown away ;
The fragile and scented blossom
Of springtime and youth is shed,
But its sound, sweet fruit of a large content
Hath ripened for us instead.

## SPRING.

Doves on the sunny eaves are cooing,
The chip-bird trills from the apple-tree,
Blossoms are bursting, and leaves renewing,
And the crocus darts up, the Spring to see.

Spring has come with its smile of blessing,
Kissing the earth with her soft warm breath
Till it blushes in flowers at her gentle caressing,
And wakes from the winter's dream of death.

Spring has come! the rills as they glisten
Sing to the pebbles and greening grass,
Under the sward the violets listen,
And dream of the sky as they hear her pass.

Coyest of roses feel her coming,
Swelling their buds with a promise to her,
And the wild bee hears her, around them humming,
And booms about with a joyous stir.

Oaks, that the bark of a century covers,
Feel ye the spell as ye groan and sigh?

Say, does the spirit that round you hovers
Whisper of youth and love gone by?

Windows are open; the pensive maiden
Leans o'er the sill with a wistful sigh, —
Her heart with tender longings o'erladen,
And a happy sadness she knows not why.

For we and the trees are brothers in nature;
We feel in our veins the season's thrill,
In hopes that reach to a higher stature,
In blind dim longings beyond our will.

Whence dost thou come, O joyous spirit?
From realms beyond this human ken,
To paint with beauty the earth we inherit,
And soften to love the hearts of men?

Dear angel! that blowest with breath of gladness
The trump to waken the year in its grave,
Shall we not hear after death's deep sadness
A voice as tender to gladden and save?

Dost thou not sing a constant promise,
That joy shall follow that other voice, —
That nothing of good shall be taken from us,
But all who hear it shall rise to rejoice?

## A BLACK DAY.

I THOUGHT it was dead;
That the years had crushed it down and trodden
it out
With their cruel tramp and tread;
That nothing was left but the ashes, cold and
gray,
Of a love that had wholly passed away,
With its hope, and fear, and joy, and doubt.
But nothing utterly dies;
And again, as I tread the paths of these silent
woods,
Where we walked and loved a few long years
ago,
And list to the wind's soft sighs
Rustling the solitudes,
And the low, perpetual hum and welling flow
Of the torrent that finds its way
And talks to itself among the mossy, gray
And unchanged boulders and stones —
Again, with a sudden, sharp surprise,
The old life leaps anew with a rush before me:
The cloud of these dreary years that have dark-
ened o'er me

Lifts and passes, and you are again beside me:
The tones of your voice I hear; I look in your tender eyes,
And I fiercely and vainly long for what is denied me,
And I curse my cruel fate, as I cursed it then.

Ah! what has brought me here to this fatal glen?
I would that the sky was a globe of fragile glass,
That I to atoms might dash it;
And the flowers, and the trees, and the whole wide world around
Were all at my very feet lying here on the ground,
That I into flinders might dash it.
With a terrible impotent rage my close-clenched hand
I shake at these pitiless skies that glare above,
And the smothered flame of a wild, despairing love,
One breath of the breeze with a sudden strength has fanned
To a world-wide conflagration;
And I cry in a torture of pain,
With a cry that is all in vain, —
Come back, come back again,
And deny me not in my desperation
The love that I crave, — the love you denied of yore!
Come back and behold me, and into my spirit pour

Some balm of consolation;
Or strike me dead to the earth, that I no more
May grovel, tortured in spirit and wild with grief,
Looking out all over the world in vain for relief.
Come back, I implore!

Curses upon the place, the time, the hour,
When first I met you;
Curses upon myself, that am all without the power,
Despite my will, to forget you!
Ah, would to God that you for an hour's brief space —
Only an hour — might suffer as I do!
Ah, would to God that you were here in my place,
With the barb in your heart, like a deer at the end of the race,
With naught but despair beside you,
Nothing but death and the heartless skies above,
That laugh alike at our joy and our grief and our love.

But no! ah no! you are happy, and gay, and glad.
And what care you for the memories dark and sad
That have ruined my hereafter!
Brook-like, above my broken hopes that lie
Hidden, perchance, beneath your memory
Your light thoughts run with laughter.
I see you smiling, — I know you are smiling still;

At the fountain of joy you stoop and drink your fill,
Careless whose heart you are breaking.
But the terrible thirst with which I am curst,
Ah me! is beyond all slaking;
For the stream of which I am drinking
Is a torrent of fire and fierce desire.
For me there is no more thinking,
No more hoping, or dreaming, or yearning,
No more living, and no more laughing,
Nothing for me but that fountain burning,
Where my spirit is ever quaffing.

Curses upon the hour and the place, I say!
Why did my footsteps lead me here?
Will these wild memories never pass away?
Can I never forget you? Ah, too dear, too dear!
Never while life shall last,
Never, ah never, till all the world has passed!

## VETERIS VESTIGIA FLAMMÆ.

Long years have gone, and down their slope
From that high crest of Youth and Hope
Life hath flowed on with downward range
Through many a devious chance and change,
And Childish Innocence has died,
And Joy, that once was eager-eyed,
Grown dim of sight, and the heart's thrill,
That sent the quick blood through my veins
At some poor nothing, now is still
Even to ambition's strains.

The Rose has lost its odors rare
Since we in childhood breathed it there
On those high hills so far away;
I know not what it is has gone
Now I return to-day,
But all the world has lost the tone
It had of yore, though wearily
It still goes on.

'T is not your fault, O perfect sky,
Across whose silent deeps serene
The white clouds sail so silently!
'T is not your fault, O murmurous wood,
Within whose leafy solitude

Of ever waving green
A whisper runs, whose fragrant sward
With myriad bright-eyed flowers is starred.
Ah no! — ye all are still as fair
As in those happy days ye were;
And yet in my unhappy mood,
So deeply is my soul subdued,
I cannot take of all your joy
My willing share.

Ah Nature, sympathetic friend,
What more hast thou to us to lend
Than what to thee we give?
Ours is the joy that makes thee glad —
The sorrow ours that makes thee sad —
Our life you only live.
And so to me to-day you bring
A sense of sweet remembering,
A craving dim and vague and sad,
That will not let my heart be glad
Despite thy beauty — will not set
My spirit free from out its net,
And turns my smile into a sigh
After the days gone by.

You plague me with a far refrain;
You haunt me with an inner pain,
A sense of something lost, that seems
To reach me like some far-off strain
Borne to me from the land of dreams;

A sweet, a sad, a faint refrain
That only sings, — Come back, come back,
Come back again!
Take all I have and give me back
The lost again!

Come back? Ah no! What once was joy,
What still to dream is bliss,
Near, my changed spirit would annoy;
Its charm in distance is.
The touch that from Youth's high-strung harp
Ecstatic music wrings
Would make but discord harsh and sharp
On age's slackened strings.
No! far and softened let them lie —
Those dreams of what has been,
By the faint haze of memory
Transfigured and serene.

No power can take me by the hand
And lead me where I fain would go —
Into that dear and dream-like land.
Ah no! ah no! —
Time's silent stream runs ever down
With unreturning flow,
And what we once have lived, loved, known,
Is past to live, love, know.
Vain is our longing, our regret,
Our joy and our despair;
The gates are shut and will not let
Our spirits backward fare.

Yet, as I speak, what power is this,
That with an odor rare
Hath had the charm my soul to bear
Through hidden secret galleries,
And searching swift the deep abyss
Of inner Life — the tortuous maze
Of tangled memories — brought to me
The lost of early days?

The simple odor of a flower
That I have plucked by chance —
So slight a thing has had the power
My being to entrance.
The present like a slough is shed,
And once again I hear
That voice that has been mute and dead
So many a dreary year;
Again those eyes look into mine,
Again a morning light
Breaks over that dear face of thine
Of childish frank delight —
Almost I seem to touch thy hand! —
Ah no! not that! — ah no!
There breaks the bridge, on which I stand —
Beyond I cannot go —
The voice, the smile, the vision fine,
Those for a moment's space were mine,
Thus far could dreams deceive;
But not the touch, — the human hand
That nothing ere will give.

## IN THE RAIN.

I STAND in the cold gray weather,
In the white and silvery rain;
The great trees huddle together,
And sway with the windy strain.
I dream of the purple glory
Of the roseate mountain-height,
And the sweet-to-remember story
Of a distant and dear delight.

The rain keeps constantly raining,
And the sky is cold and gray,
And the wind in the trees keeps complaining
That summer has passed away; —
But the gray and the cold are haunted
By a beauty akin to pain, —
By the sense of a something wanted,
That never will come again.

## IN THE MOONLIGHT.

We sat in the perfect moonlight;
The stars were dim and rare,
And above us the elm-trees rustled
In the waves of the cool night-air.

From the olives and vineyard near us
The kiou-owl plaintively cried,
And afar o'er the misty hollows
Its mate with a wail replied.

The peasant sang in the distance,
The watchdog barked at the star,
And the clack of the cradles beating the hemp
Came faint from the farms afar.

We talked of the times of our childhood,
Of the days forever flown,
Of their games and their jests and their sorrows,
And the playmates we had known;

And then there came o'er us a silence,
While the cypresses sighed overhead, —
And dreaming we sat and listened
To the voices of the dead.

## THE SAD COUNTRY.

THERE is a sad, sad country,
  Where often I go to see
A little child that for all my love
  Will never come back to me.

There smiles he serenely on me
  With a look that makes me cry;
And he prattling runs beside me,
  Till I wish that I could die.

That country is dim and dreary,
  Yet I cannot keep away,
Though the shadows there are heavy and dark,
  And the sunlight sadder than they.

And there, in a ruined garden,
  Which once was gay with flowers,
I sit by a broken fountain,
  And weep and pray for hours.

## AT PEACE.

'T is twilight! the murmurous voices
Of maidens that stroll with their lovers
Beneath the dark ilex's shadows
Come faint to my ear.

No cloud in the soft azure heaven
Is floating — the moon in its fulness
Looks down with a mild face of pity,
And night holds its breath.

Innumerous under the grasses
The grilli are ceaselessly chirping,
Above them the luccioli lighten,
And all is at peace!

At peace! ay, the peace of the desert!
The silence, the deep desolation,
That comes when the blast has swept o'er us
And buried our hopes.

At peace! when the music that thrilled us,
The hand that its harmonies wakened,
The voice that was soul to the singing,
Alike are at rest!

At peace! ay, the peace of the ocean,
When past is the storm where we foundered,
And morning looks o'er the blank waters,
And hears but their moan!

## EIDOLON.

This was the shape for which so long in vain
My soul had panted: "Ah — at last" I cried,
As with a beating heart and flaming brain
I sprang to clasp it — "ah! my love, my bride,
Mine, mine at last — thou whom so long my thought
In secret hath pursued, whom flattering hope
Hath falsely promised, whom my soul hath sought
Through many an ambushed doubt adown the slope
Of many a wild and glittering despair,
Ever to lose thee in the morning gleam
Or twilight shadow — now! O sweet and rare,
O perfect creature, in these arms at last,
At last, I clasp thee — and I hold thee fast,
To own forever."

As I spoke, the air
Sighed through the fading grass — the sunlit stream
Shuddered and crisped to shadow — through the leaves

A quiver passed as of a voice that grieves,
And down the lengthening distance died away,
While over all a silent darkness crept.
Swift as a thought, evasive as a dream,
She vanished — all the world was dead and gray,
And silent and oppressed I stood and wept.

## TWO PARTINGS.

I.

THE breath of the wild briar rose makes sweet
The twilight air along the dewy lane, —
Soft yields the greensward to our lingering feet,
And thou art with me, dearest, once again.

There the last rook goes, dropping from the spire,
And drifts a black spot o'er the silvery light.
And see! the low flat moon with orange fire
Burns through the trees that fringe yon sloping height.

Hark! was not that the sound of running feet?
They must not find us here alone, and thus!
One long last kiss, dear love! we yet shall meet
Somehow, — God knows, — and will take care of us.

II.

What shadow flickers on the curtain there?
I knew, beloved, thou wouldst come at last!
Ah death! its weight is all too much to bear
Now thou art come — and all the past is past.

Look in my eyes! oh! there 's so much to say!
How shall I lift its load from off my heart?
My head 's so weak — my strength all flows
away
How shall I say it all before we part?

I see you once again! — 'T is not a dream!
Yet all 's so dim — oh stay beside me — stay!
Throw your arms round me — catch me — for I
seem
To lose you, love, — and all things fade away.

## TWENTY YEARS AGO.

Nina, do you those nights remember
When in the moonlight's amber glow,
Those blissful evenings of September,
We sat and watched this river flow?
Ah me! 't is twenty years ago!

Ah, then we swore to love forever,
While feeling made our voices low,
And Fate we dared our hearts to sever,
For Youth and Love no danger know —
Ah me! 't is twenty years ago!

What pledges there to Life were given,
What dreams that into deeds should grow,
The great moon listening up in heaven
While we were whispering there below —
Ah me! 't is twenty years ago.

But Love and Youth and Fame and Glory,
So real then in Life's first glow,
Are now a dim remembered story
Of some divine and dreamlike show
That passed — some twenty years ago.

And in these evenings of September
I pace the path with footsteps slow,
And sighing, dreaming, I remember
The sweetness gone from here below —
Ah me! some twenty years ago.

And half a dream and half ideal
Through memory's magic glass you go
While o'er your head, but scarcely real,
There shines a faint auroral glow
Ah me — of twenty years ago.

## TO BIANCA.

"Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas."

CEASE to peer into the future, nor torture yourself with care
Of fancied delights or troubles that never may fall to your share!
The present alone is ours; in that let us live content,
Enjoying the daily blessings the gods for the moment have lent.

And cease to torment your spirit with that which has passed away,
The love that has vanished, the passion, the folly that led you astray;
Not hoping too much, not regretting — for what is more vain than regret? —
And, never the gladness forgetting, the pain and the sorrow forget.

Take, O Bianca, the beauty and joy of the world to thy heart!
For the power to enjoy is not only a blessing, — 't is also an art.

And be glad for the gifts that are granted, nor
envy what cannot be thine;
For the life, that with Fate is in balance, is
peaceful, and, so far, divine.

## IN THE GARDEN.

Summer is dying, slowly dying —
  She fades with every passing day;
In the garden alleys she wanders, sighing,
  And pauses to grieve at the sad decay.

The flowers that came with the spring's first swallow,
  When March crept timidly over the hill,
And slept at noon in the sunny hollow —
  The snowdrop, the crocus, the daffodil,

The lily, white for an angel to carry,
  The violet, faint with its spirit-breath,
The passion-flower, and the fleeting, airy
  Anemone — all have been struck by death.

Autumn the leaves is staining and strewing,
  And spreading a veil o'er the landscape rare;
The glory and gladness of summer are going,
  And a feeling of sadness is in the air.

The purple hibiscus is shrivelled and withered,
  And languid lolls its furry tongue;

The burning pomegranates are ripe to be gathered;
The grilli their last farewell have sung;

The fading oleander is showing
Its last rose-clusters over the wall,
And the tubes of the trumpet-flower are strewing
The gravel-walks as they loosen and fall;

The crocketed spire of the hollyhock towers,
For the sighing breeze to rock and swing;
On its top is the last of its bell-like flowers,
For the wandering bee its knell to ring.

In their earthen vases the lemons yellow,
The sun-drunk grapes grow lucent and thin,
The pears on the sunny espalier mellow,
And the fat figs swell in their purple skin;

The petals have dropped from the spicy carnation;
And the heartless dahlia, formal and proud,
Like a worldly lady of lofty station,
Loveless stares at the humble crowd.

And the sunflower, too, looks boldly around her;
While the bella-donna, so wickedly fair,
Shorn of the purple flowers that crowned her,
Is telling her Borgian beads in despair.

See! by the fountain that softly bubbles,
Spilling its rain in the lichened vase,
Summer pauses! — her tender troubles
Shadowing over her pensive face.

The lizard stops on its brim to listen,
The butterfly wavers dreamily near,
And the dragon-flies in their green mail glisten,
And watch her, as pausing she drops a tear —

Not as she stood in her August perfection!
Not as she looked in the freshness of June!
But gazing around with a tender dejection,
And a weary face like the morning moon.

The breeze through the leafy garden quivers,
Dying away with a sigh and moan:
A shade o'er the darkening fountain shivers,
And Summer, ghost-like, hath vanished and gone.

## SYMBOLS.

DEDICATED TO E. M. S.

Still hearts, whose passions never stir,
  At times I envy your repose!
Smooth lakes, where coyest wild-fowl whir,
  Ye feel no troublous ebbs and flows!

Yet, tropic hearts, your fiercer play
  Of sun and storm, of noon and night,
Is dearer than perpetual day
  In Arctic summer's glacial light.

Great clouds, which bear upon your backs
  The sunshine, in your breasts the storm —
Alps of the air, whose pathless tracks
  Ye course with ever-changing form;

By morning touched with aureole light;
  At sunset stranded — firing far
Your dull distress-guns — or at night
  Raced through by many a startled star —

Ye are the types that Genius loves!
  So, moulded by an inward stress,
A shade, a storm, it o'er us moves,
  A power to threaten or to bless.

## THE GARDEN OF ROSES.

I WALKED in the garden of roses with thee,
In the garden where never again we shall be,
And thy ghost on the garden is all that I see, —
But thou comest never.

The light of the morning, the glory that threw
O'er the roses and myrtles its mystical hue,
Is gone, with the glory of Love that we knew,
Forever and ever.

No more in its shadows the nightingales trill —
The roses are ruined — the fountain is still —
And the fountain that leaped on the heart with a thrill
Is shattered forever.

Alone in the garden I cry in my pain,
"Oh! bloom again, roses! O Love, come again!
Come back, O beloved!" I cry — but in vain —
Ah never — no never.

A terrible shadow across it is thrown,
And I walk in that shadow, despairing — alone —
In that shadow of death and of sorrow I groan
"Ah never!" — forever.

## SONG.

Come, love! the sun has risen long,
And hedge and tree
Are all alive with tremulous song;
Awake! and come with me.
The grass is pearled with gleaming dew,
The larks are thrilling in the sky,
And all the world's awaiting you —
And I — my darling — I!

Look from above, that those dear eyes
May dawn on me!
My love, my life, my light, arise!
That I the morn may see.
There 's ne'er a cloud to mar the day,
The air is soft and fresh and sweet;
But all the world is dull and gray
Till thy dear face I greet.

Sweetest of all that live and move,
Arise! Arise!
The day is short, too short for love,
The swift hour fleets and flies.
The moments ne'er will come again
That heedlessly you waste,
And joy deferred is half a pain —
Then haste! my darling, haste!

## ART.

DEDICATED TO G. H.

Is this the stately shape I saw
  In Greece a thousand years ago;
Who ruled the world by Beauty's law,
  And used among the gods to go?

Who, wheresoe'er she turned her eyes,
  Below her saw a reverent throng;
Whose praise was taken as a prize;
  Who made immortal with a song?

Now, scant in garb, a mendicant,
  She stretches forth her prayerful palms,
And wealth, in pity for her want,
  Contemptuous tosses her its alms.

This gift is not for charity,
  But love, that at thy feet I lay.
Oh, take my heart that throbs for thee,
  And smile as in the ancient day!

## TWO STARS.

Look! love, into the sky, and say,
When I am gone beyond the sea,
What stars of all the many stars
Shall shine for you and me.

See! there above, in Charles's Wain,
Those two, that close together shine,
One bright and large — *that* shall be yours —
The little faint one, mine.

The little one, that has no praise
From all who look — the satellite —
I know not if it have a name,
It shrinks so out of sight.

## ON THE DESERT.

All around,
To the bound
Of the vast horizon's round,
All sand, sand, sand —
All burning, glaring sand —
On my camel's hump I ride,
As he sways from side to side,
With an awkward step of pride,
And his scraggy head uplifted, and his eye so long and bland.

Naught is near,
In the blear
And simmering atmosphere,
But the shadow on the sand,
The shadow of the camel on the sand;
All alone, as I ride,
O'er the desert's ocean wide,
It is ever at my side;
It haunts me, it pursues me, if I flee, or if I stand.

Not a sound,
All around,

Save the padded beat and bound
Of the camel on the sand,
Of the feet of the camel on the sand.
Not a bird is in the air,
Though the sun, with burning stare,
Is prying everywhere,
O'er the yellow thirsty desert, so desolately grand.

Not a breath
Stirs the death
Of the desert, — not a wreath
Curls upward from the sand,
From the waves of loose, fine sand —
And I doze, half asleep,
Of the wild Sirocs that sweep
O'er the caravans, and heap
With a cloud of powdery, dusty death the terror-stricken band.

Their groans
And their moans
Have departed, — but their bones
Are whitening on the sand —
Are blanching and grinning on the sand, —
Oh, Allah! thou art great!
Save me from such a fate,
Nor through that fearful strait
Lead me, thy basest servant, unto the Prophet-land.

## LOVE.

When daffodils began to blow,
And apple blossoms thick to snow
  Upon the brown and breaking mould —
'T was in the spring — we kissed and sighed
And loved, and heaven and earth defied,
  We were so young and bold.

The fluttering bob-link dropped his song,
The first young swallow curved along,
  The daisy stared in sturdy pride,
When loitering on we plucked the flowers,
But dared not own those thoughts of ours,
  Which yet we could not hide.

Tiptoe you bent the lilac spray
And shook its rain of dew away
  And reached it to me with a smile:
"Smell that, how full of spring it is" —
'T is now as full of memories
  As 't was of dew erewhile.

Your hand I took, to help you down
The broken wall, from stone to stone,
  Across the shallow bubbling brook.

Ah! what a thrill went from that palm,
That would not let my blood be calm,
And through my pulses shook.

Often our eyes met as we turned,
And both our cheeks with passion burned,
And both our hearts grew riotous,
Till, as we sat beneath the grove,
I kissed you — whispering, "we love" —
As thus I do — and thus.

When passion had found utterance,
Our frightened hearts began to glance
Into the Future's every day;
And how shall we our love conceal,
Or dare our passion to reveal —
"We are too young," they 'll say.

Alas! we are not now too young,
Yet love to us hath safely clung,
Despite of sorrow, years, and care —
But ah! we have not what we had,
We cannot be so free, so glad,
So foolish as we were.

## THE WALTZ.

My arm is around your waist, love,
Your hand is clasping mine,
Your head leans over my shoulder,
As around in the waltz we twine.
I feel your quick heart throbbing,
Your panting breath I breathe,
And the odor rare of your hyacinth hair
Comes faintly up from beneath.

To the rhythmic beat of the music,
In the floating ebb and flow
Of the tense violin, and the lisping flute,
And the burring bass we go.
Whirling, whirling, whirling,
In a rapture swift and sweet,
To the pleading violoncello's tones,
And the pulsing piano's beat.

The world is alive with motion,
The lights are whirling all,
And the feet and brain are stirred by the strain
Of the music's incessant call.
Dance! dance! dance! it calls to us;
And borne on the waves of sound,

We circling swing, in a dizzy ring,
With the whole world wheeling round.

The jewels dance on your bosom,
On your arms the bracelets dance,
The swift blood speaks in your mantling cheeks,
In your eyes is a dewy trance;
Your white robes flutter around you,
Nothing is calm or still,
And the senses stir in the music's whirr
With a swift electric thrill.

We pause; and your waist releasing,
We stand and breathe for a while;
And, your face afire with a sweet desire,
You look in my eyes and smile.
We scarcely can speak for panting,
But I lean to you, and say,
Ah! who, my love, can resist you,
You have waltzed my heart away.

## AT DIEPPE.

THE shivering column of the moonlight lies
Upon the crumbling sea;
Down the lone shore the flying curlew cries
Half humanly.

With hoarse, dull wash the backward dragging surge
Its raucous pebbles rakes,
Or swelling dark runs down with toppling verge,
And flashing breaks.

The light-house flares and darkens from the cliff,
And stares with lurid eye
Fiercely along the sea and shore as if
Some foe to spy.

What gnawing thought, oh, ever moaning sea,
Haunts thy perturbed breast —
What dark crime weighs upon thy memory
And spoils thy rest?

Thy soft swell lifts and swings the new-launched yacht
With polished spars and deck,
But crawls and grovels where the bare ribs rot
Of the old wreck.

Oh, treacherous courtier! thy deceitful lie
To youth is gayly told,
But in remorse I see thee cringingly
Crouch to the old.

## THE VIOLET.

Oh! faint delicious spring-time violet,
Thine odor, like a key,
Turns noiselessly in memory's wards to let
A thought of sorrow free.

The breath of distant fields upon my brow
Blows through that open door
The sound of wind-borne bells more sweet and low,
And sadder than of yore.

It comes afar from that beloved place,
And that beloved hour,
When Life hung ripening in Love's golden grace,
Like grapes above a bower.

A spring goes singing through its reedy grass,
The lark sings o'er my head
Drowned in the sky — oh pass, ye visions, pass!
I would that I were dead; —

Why hast thou opened that forbidden door
From which I ever flee?
O vanished Joy! O Love, that art no more,
Let my vexed spirit be!

O violet! thy odor through my brain
Hath searched, and stung to grief
This sunny day, as if a curse did stain
Thy velvet leaf.

## THE ROSE.

When Nature had shaped her rustic beauties, —
The bright-eyed daisy, the violet sweet,
The blushing poppy that nods and trembles
In its scarlet hood among the wheat, —

She paused and pondered; — and then she fashioned
The scentless camellia proud and cold,
The spicy carnation freaked with passion,
The lily pale for an angel to hold.

All were fair, yet something was wanting,
Of freer perfection, of larger repose;
And again she paused, — then in one glad moment
She breathed her whole soul into the rose.

With you, dear Violet, Daisy, and Poppy,
Pleasant it was in the fields to play,
In the careless and heartless joy of childhood,
When an hour was as long as manhood's day.

And with you, O passionate, bright Carnation,
A boy's brief love for a time I knew,

And you I admired, proud Lady Camellia,
And, Lily, I sang in the church with you.

But O my Rose, my frank, free-hearted,
My perfect above all conscious arts,
What were they beside thee, O Rose, my darling!
To you I have given my heart of hearts.

## LOOKING DOWN.

AFLOAT on the brim of a placid stream,
Pleasant it is to lie and dream,
With heaven above, and far below
The deeps of death — sad deeps that know
The still reflections of earth and sky
In their silent, serene obscurity.
And hanging thus upon Life's thin rim,
Death seems so sweet in that silvery, dim,
Deep world below, were it not half-best
To sink into it and there find rest? —
Both, both together, ere age can come,
And loving has lost its perfect bloom.
One tilt, dear love, and we both might be
Beyond earth's sorrows eternally.

## LOOKING UP.

The winds are forever blowing, blowing,
The streams are forever flowing, flowing,
And all things forever going, going,
  Nothing on earth is at rest, —
Ever departing, never abiding,
Sliding away, and onward gliding,
  Alike the worst, the best.

The sky is a glacier paved with snow,
And heaped with many a crowded floe,
And here and there a rift breaks through,
Showing behind an abyss of blue, —
A tender silence beyond, afar,
Out of the tumult and rush, and jar
Of the winds that drive and rage below
  And beat on the mountain's crest, —
And for all we hope, and more than we know,
  There, perchance, is rest.

## THE LOCUST.

Voice of Summer, hidden from the eye
In the sunny tree's green privacy,
  Fiery locust — shrill again, again!
Drunk with sunshine — free of work and care,
Happy idler, while the world is fair,
Sing to us from out thy leafy lair,
  Praise of idleness to soothe our pain.

What is hotter than that voice of thine!
Like a sunbeam stinging sharp and fine
  Through the inmost chambers of the brain;
Burning with the noonday's sultry glare,
Shining dust and glassy simmering air,
Skies of brass, blear sands, and deserts bare,
  Is the fierce sirocco of thy strain.

Though the blinds are shut and all the room
Shrouded softly in a cool, half gloom,
  Thy shrill voice the burning out-world sings,—
While the fig-tree scratches at the blind,
And the shadow of the grape spray, twined
Round the balcony, with every wind
  Moves across the casement as it swings.

Ah! how sweet that dear Italian tune
Thou art singing! In the burning noon
Dreams the shepherd by the ruined tomb —
On his staff he leans — the while his sheep
Round the wall's scant shadow nibbling creep,
And the bearded goats rear up and peep
Through the rifts and browse the poppy's bloom.

In the fields the peasant feels the sun
Beating more intolerably down
While thou singest as he panting stands
Breast high in the grain, or hid between
Trellised vines that o'er their cany screen
Topple, waving all their thick-leaved green,
Plucking purple grapes with double hands.

In the villa, checkered sun and shade
Spot the broken moss-rough balustrade,
And a silver network o'er the rail
Flashes from the basin's quivering tides.
Through the grass the sudden lizard slides
Up the wall, and stands with tremulous sides,
Gleaming in his green enamelled mail.

Now the sun the wasp-stung nectarine rots,
Freckles o'er the rusty apricots,
And distends the grape's thin skin with wine;
Now the glowing orange drops and breaks —
Apples strain their tight and shining cheeks,
And the smooth, green, lazy melon takes
Its siesta in the coiling vine.

Childhood's voice is in thy fiery clirr,
Olden summer memories thou canst stir,
Golden visions we no more shall see:
Thou canst bid the pictured past arise
To the wanderer's heart, who dying lies,
Far from home, and to his closing eyes
Summon up its lost felicity.

Yes! he treads again the garden ground
Which his childish feet once pattered round;
Where the clustering oleanders tower —
Where, while rocking on its flowery stalk,
Bees he prisoned in the hollyhock,
Listening to their buzz of angry talk,
As they struggled in the crumpled flower.

There the sunflower's shield of brown and gold,
Flaming in the noonday gay and bold,
Topples on its tall o'erburdened stem;
There the currants hang their ruddy beads,
There its flower-globes the hydrangea spreads,
There the spicy pink its odor sheds
From its painted petals' fringèd hem.

And a little hand is in his own
Whose warm pressure never more is known,
Who was taken in her childish bloom;
But those sunny curls still seem to float
On the air the while he hears thy note,
And her spirit wavers through his thought,
Like a sunbeam in a darkened room.

Voices full of wild and childish glee,
Faces he again shall never see,
  Are around him while thy voice he hears.
And the ticking watch ticks not so loud
In that silent room that shutters shroud,
And the cautious figure o'er him bowed
  Through his dying eyelids sees the tears.

Chirp away, then, happy summer guest,
Bringing unto every human breast
  Summer visions, early memories, —
Trill thy gauzy wings, and let us hear
Through the noon's intensest atmosphere
Thy fine clarion sounding shrilly clear,
  Praise of summer idleness and ease.

CASTEL GANDOLFO, *August*, 1852.

## COMING INTO PORT.

I HAVE weathered the turbulent cape of storms
Where the winds of passion blow;
I have sheered by the reefs that gnash to foam
The shallows they lurk below;
I have joyed in the surge of the whistling sea,
And the wild strong stress of the gale,
As my brave barque quivered and leaped, alive,
To the strain of its crowded sail.
Then the masterful spirit was on me,
And with Nature I wrestled glad;
And Danger was like a passionate bride,
And Love was itself half mad.
Then Life was a storm that blew me on,
And flew as the wild winds fly;
And Hope was a pennon streaming out
High up — to play with the sky.

Oh the golden days, the glorious days
That so lavish of life we spent!
Oh the dreaming nights with the silent stars
'Neath the sky's mysterious tent!
Oh the light, light heart and the strong desire
And the pulse's quickening thrill,
When Joy lived with us, and Beauty smiled,

And Youth had its free, full will!
The whole wide world was before us then,
And never our spirits failed,
And we never looked back, but onward, onward
Into the Future we sailed;
Ever before us the far horizon
Whose dim and exquisite line
Alone divided our Earth from Heaven,
Our Life from a Life divine.

Now my voyage is well nigh over,
And my staunchest spars are gone;
And my sails are rent, and my barnacled barque
Drags slowly and heavily on.
The faint breeze comes from the distant shore
With its odors dim and sweet,
And soon in the silent harbor of peace
Long-parted friends I shall greet.
The voyage is well nigh over,
Though at times a capful of wind
Will rattle the ropes and fill the sails,
And furrow a wake behind.
But the sea has become a weariness,
And glad into port I shall come
With my sails all furled, and my anchor dropped,
And my cargo carried home.

## THE END OF THE BANQUET.

FAREWELL, my friends! — I hear the call
I cannot but obey; —
Farewell! for I must leave you all,
Had I the wish to stay.

And yet — forgive me — I rejoice,
For I am old and tired; —
Worn by the talk, the lights, the noise,
And all I once desired.

After a time life's very best
Begins to stale and pall:
I go to silence and to rest, —
That seems the best of all.

# SONNETS.

## A GLANCE.

LITTLE we know what secret influence
A word, a glance, a casual tone may bring,
That, like the wind's breath on a chorded string,
May thrill the memory, touch the inner sense,
And waken dreams that come we know not whence;
Or like the light touch of a bird's swift wing,
The lake's still face a moment visiting,
Leave pulsing rings, when he has vanished thence.
You looked into my eyes an instant's space,
And all the boundaries of time and place
Broke down, and far into a world beyond
Of buried hopes and dreams my soul had sight,
Where dim desires long lost, and memories fond,
Rose in a soft mirage of tender light.

## A SHADOW.

GLAD is the sunshine, perfect is the day,
A pearl of days; a flawless chrysolite
The sky above us lifts its dome of light,
And loitering clouds along its blue fields stray,
Unshepherded by winds that far away
Are sleeping in their caves. This pure delight,
This silent peace, this gladness infinite,
Is troubled by no sorrow, no dismay.
Yes, for o'er all the shadow of a fear
Is brooding, that the restless spirit knows,
The doubting human spirit that forecasts,
Even in the brightest that surrounds us here,
The inevitable change, — for naught life knows
Is fixed and permanent, naught lives that lasts.

## THE MIGHTY MAKERS.

I.

WHOSE are those forms august that, in the press
And busy blames and praises of to-day,
Stand so serene above life's fierce affray
With ever youthful strength and loveliness?
Those are the mighty makers, whom no stress
Of time can shame, nor fashion sweep away,
Whom art begot on nature in the play
Of healthy passion, scorning base excess.
Rising perchance in mists, and half obscure
When up the horizon of their age they came,
Brighter with years they shine in steadier light,
Great constellations that will aye endure,
Though myriad meteors of ephemeral fame
Across them flash, to vanish into night.

II.

Such was our Chaucer in the early prime
Of English verse, who held to Nature's hand
And walked serenely through its morning land,
Gladsome and hale, brushing its dewy rime.
And such was Shakespeare, whose strong soul could climb

Crags of sheer terror, sound the ocean grand
Of passion's deeps, or over Fancy's strand
Trip with his fairies, keeping step and time.
His, too, the power to laugh out full and clear,
With unembittered joyance, and to move
Along the silent, shadowy paths of love
As tenderly as Dante, whose austere,
Stern spirit through the worlds below, above,
Unsmiling strode, to tell their tidings here.

## EUROPA.

### A PICTURE BY PAUL VERONESE.

ZEPHYR is wandering here with gentle sound
The first fresh fragrance of the spring to seek;
The milk-white steer, whose budding horns are crowned
With flowery garlands, kneeling on the ground
Receives his burden fair, and turns his sleek
Mild head around, her sandalled foot to lick;
Luxuriant, joyous, fresh, with roses bound
About her sunny head, and on her cheek
The glow of morn, Europa mounts the steer.
One handmaid clasps her girdle, and one calls
The hovering Loves to bring their garlands near.
From her full breast the loosened drapery falls,
As borne by Love o'er slope and lea she goes,
Glad with exuberant life — fresh as a new-blown rose.

## GIOTTO'S CHAPEL.

PADUA.

How sweet the mild retirement of this spot!
This area, where the gladiator bled,
With turf and flowers is softly carpeted;
These girdling walls where later knighthood fought
Now draped with ivy stand, remembering not
Their scenes of former life. But here, instead,
The artist's steps in pilgrimage are led
To seek the shrine by Giotto's genius wrought.
Here, dedicate to art and piety,
His simple chapel stands; and painted here
Upon its walls a pictured life I see,
Inspired by feeling, earnest and sincere.
What faith, what simple dignity and grace
Art since hath lost, are in this cloistered place!

## IT WOULD NOT SEEM TO ME ONE HALF SO STRANGE.

It would not seem to me one half so strange
To see the door with one burst open wide,
And feel you once more bounding to my side
All full of Life and Joy, as seems this change
That hath upborne you from the senses' range
And left a blank that cannot be supplied, —
Mere wreck and ruin where were joy and pride,
And hope, and love's perpetual interchange.
I crave to see you, hear you once again, —
Cold Nature has no more the charm to cheer, —
The sunshine hurts me with a secret pain
I never knew when you were with us here.
Dear spirit! we are wretched and alone,
But yet I pray you cannot hear our moan.

Albano, *April* 3, 1854.

## TIMON.

I.

WHAT were we made for? If to struggle here,
To strive, to suffer, train each faculty
With many a pain, and then at last to die
With naught beyond, no fuller, larger sphere
Of onward going unto knowledge clear, —
How vain seems Life — betwixt a smile and sigh
Across Time's section of Infinity
Flitting a moment, but to disappear.

It cannot be that the Almighty Power
Without our asking makes us thus the prey
Of pain, disease, death; for one little hour
To beat like some poor fly against the pane,
Through which he sees the open, boundless day
Of perfect promise, — and but beats in vain.

II.

We are pursued by Fate; nothing on earth
Flowers into satisfaction; on the skirt
Of all temptation, hidden yet alert,
Hangs disappointment, ready to spring forth
And jar with discord the clear song of mirth;
Even our best pleasure has the sting of hurt,

And prayers and tears are futile to avert
The Nemesis that haunts us from our birth.

Oh! what avail our struggles, who are caught
In Fate's inextricable web? In vain
Through the dark future our exhausted thought
Seeks for a resting place secure from pain;
Our Present crumbles 'neath us while we laugh,
Our Past has but a sigh for epitaph.

III.

High as man's hopes may fly, he ever falls
On his own shadow when on earth he alights.
Joy's exaltation, Love's upspringing flights,
Lift us in air but for brief intervals.
We are Earth's children, we are Nature's thralls,
Whom Discontent pursues, and black Care spites,
And Fancy lures, and Disappointment blights,
And Fortune drives about like random balls.

Nothing is good to us — such fools are we —
But what is lost or promised. Naught we know
So sweet as that dear song of "Long ago,"
So glad as that wild dream of "Yet to be."
Will death unite the Future with the Past,
And clasp perfected Hope in Memory's arms at last?

## AFTER LONG DAYS OF DULL PERPETUAL RAIN.

After long days of dull perpetual rain,
From low gray skies, the sun at last shines bright,
And all the sparkling trees are glad with light,
And all the happy world laughs out again;
The sorrow is forgotten, past the pain;
For nature has no memory, feels the blight
Of no regret, nor mars the day's delight
With idle fears and hopes and longings vain.

Ah me! it is not so with us; the ghost
Of vanished joys pursues us everywhere.
We live as much in all that we have lost
As what we own; no present is so fair
That the best moment's sunlight is not crossed
By shadowy shapes of hope, and fear, and care.

SCHERZI.

## SINGING AT TWILIGHT.

You sang the olden songs, and, sadly dreaming,
I lay and listened, while you thought I slept;
And if the tears were from my eyelids streaming,
You saw them not, and so I freely wept.

Round us the silent, shadowy night was stealing;
You were a voice alone within the dark;
And from life's hardened crust a tender feeling
Broke, like a blossom, through the rugged bark.

You were again a young and blushing maiden,
Who leaned upon my breast and breathed your love,
And I, no more with disappointments laden,
Seemed, as of yore, beside you in the grove.

The sky above us was serenely tender,
The moon shone softly gleaming through the trees;
Clasped heart to heart in Love's complete surrender,
Life seemed an island in enchanted seas.

Dim longings, vague desires, like breaths from heaven,
Thrilled all our being with a strange unrest;
And all the finest strings that God hath given
Trembled to voiceless music in the breast.

Your hand's electric fire again ran through me,
I breathed the hyacinth odor of your hair;
Your soul in long sweet kisses clung unto me,
And filled me with a rapturous despair.

Your voice had ceased; yet still around me fluttered
The visions that your songs had raised in me;
When — "Mr. Jones," cried Jeames — "Curse Jones," I muttered,
And you — "Bring in the lights; 't is time for tea."

I was again an old hard-hearted sinner,
And you were fifty, and you wore a cap;
Laughing, you said to Jones, "After his dinner,
You see, the old man likes to take his nap."

## UN BACIO DATO NON È MAI PERDUTO.

Because we once drove together
In the moonlight over the snow,
With the sharp bells ringing their tinkling chime,
So many a year ago,

So, now, as I hear them jingle,
The winter comes back again,
Though the summer stirs in the heavy trees,
And the wild rose scents the lane.

We gather our furs around us,
Our faces the keen air stings,
And noiseless we fly o'er the snow-hushed world
Almost as if we had wings.

Enough is the joy of mere living,
Enough is the blood's quick thrill;
We are simply happy, I care not why,
We are happy beyond our will.

The trees are with icicles jewelled,
The walls are o'er-surfed with snow;
The houses with marble whiteness are roofed,
In their windows the home-lights glow.

Through the tense, clear sky above us
The keen stars flash and gleam,
And wrapped in their silent shroud of snow
The broad fields lie and dream.

And jingling with low, sweet clashing
Ring the bells as our good horse goes,
And tossing his head, from his nostrils red
His frosty breath he blows.

And closely you nestle against me,
While around your waist my arm
I have slipped — 't is so bitter, bitter cold —
It is only to keep us warm.

We talk, and then we are silent;
And suddenly — you know why —
I stooped — could I help it? You lifted your face —
We kissed — there was nobody nigh.

And no one was ever the wiser,
And no one was ever the worse;
The skies did not fall, — as perhaps they ought, —
And we heard no paternal curse.

I never told it — did you, dear? —
From that day unto this;
But my memory keeps in its inmost recess,
Like a perfume, that innocent kiss.

I dare say you have forgotten,
'T was so many a year ago ;
Or you may not choose to remember it,
Time may have changed you so.

The world so chills us and kills us,
Perhaps you may scorn to recall
That night, with its innocent impulse, —
Perhaps you 'll deny it all.

But if of that fresh, sweet nature
The veriest vestige survive,
You remember that moment's madness, —
You remember that moonlight drive.

## PERSICA.

O Persica, Persica, pale and fair,
With a ripe blush on your cheek,
How pretty — how very pretty you are,
Until you begin to speak!

As for a heart and soul, my dear,
You have not enough to sin;
Outside so fair, like a peach you are,
With a stone for a heart within.

## A MUSICAL BOX.

I KNOW her, the thing of laces, and silk,
  And ribbons, and gauzes, and crinoline,
With her neck and shoulders as white as milk,
  And her doll-like face and conscious mien.
A lay figure fashioned to fit a dress,
  All stuffed within with straw and bran ;
Is that a woman to love, to caress ?
  Is that a creature to charm a man ?

Only listen ! how charmingly she talks
  Of your dress and hers — of the Paris *mode* —
Of the coming ball — of the opera-box —
  Of jupons, and flounces, and fashions abroad.
Not a bonnet in church but she knows it well,
  And Fashion she worships with downcast
    eyes ;
A *marchande de modes* is her oracle,
  And Paris her earthly paradise.

She 's perfect to whirl with in a waltz ;
  And her shoulders show well on a soft divan,
As she lounges at night and spreads her silks,
  And plays with her bracelets and flirts her
    fan ;

With a little laugh at whatever you say,
And rounding her "No" with a look of surprise,
And lisping her "Yes," with an air *distrait*,
And a pair of aimless, wandering eyes.

Her duty this Christian never omits!
She makes her calls, and she leaves her cards,
And enchants a circle of half-fledged wits,
And slim *attachés* and six-foot Guards.
Her talk is of people who 're nasty or nice,
And she likes little bon-bons of compliments;
While she seasons their sweetness, by way of spice,
With some witless scandal she often invents.

Is this the thing for a mother or wife?
Could love ever grow on such barren rocks?
Is this a companion to take for a life?
One might as well marry a musical box.
You exhaust in a day her full extent;
'T is the same little tinkle of tunes always;
You must wind her up with a compliment,
To be bored with the only airs she plays.

## ON THE SURFACE.

From early light to late at night,
I chatter, chatter, chatter,
If things are sad or things are bad,
Dear me! what does it matter?
The livelong day to me is gay,
And I keep always laughing;
The world at best is such a jest,
'T is only fit for chaffing.

Along the brim of life to skim,
Not in its depths be sinking,
With jest and smile time to beguile,
Not bore one's self with thinking.
To touch and go, and to and fro,
To gossip, talk, and tattle,
To hear the news, and to amuse
One's world with endless prattle, —

This is my life: I hate all strife,
With none I am a snarler;
I like to joke with pleasant folk
In any pleasant parlor.
And when the day has slipped away,
Ere I blow out my candle,
I sit awhile, and muse and smile,
O'er that last bit of scandal.

## ROSA HESTERNA.

Yes, my love, it was fresh and glowing,
Blooming and beautiful, — yesterday!
Now its odor is sickly, its petals are going,
Its beauty is vanished — throw it away!
Pray, don't thrust it under my nose!
Who can endure a yesterday's rose?

I cannot deny your pretty sayings —
"It gave its life, and died in your hand,"
And "There are no deaths without decayings;" —
But the dying of roses who can stand?
The sweeter the odor the worse the decay;
And a yesterday's rose! — oh, throw it away!

Gratitude, — pity, — sense of duty?
Oh, my dear, don't talk such prose!
If duty don't rhyme, as you say, to beauty,
Does yesterday's odor haunt yesterday's rose?
To-morrow, perhaps, I shall throw you away!
Perhaps, to-morrow, but not to-day.

Now, while your lips are fresh as roses,
Kiss me, for preaching becomes you not!

Time for his wisdom his penance imposes;
When things are ripe they begin to rot.
And our loves and our roses, when they decay,
However we sigh, must be thrown away.

## O FILIA PULCHRA.

How your sweet face revives again
  The dear old time, my Pearl, —
If I may use the pretty name
  I called you when a girl.

You are so young; while Time of me
  Has made a cruel prey,
It has forgotten you, nor swept
  One grace of youth away.

The same sweet face, the same sweet smile,
  The same lithe figure, too! —
What did you say? "It was perchance
  Your mother that I knew?"

Ah, yes, of course, it must have been,
  And yet the same you seem,
And for a moment, all these years
  Fled from me like a dream.

Then what your mother would not give,
  Permit me, dear, to take,
The old man's privilege — a kiss —
  Just for your mother's sake.

## SNOWDROP.

When, full of warm and eager love,
I clasp you in my fond embrace,
You gently push me back and say,
"Take care, dear Charles, you 'll spoil my lace."

You kiss me just as you would kiss
Some woman friend you chanced to see;
You call me "dearest." All love's forms
Are yours, not its reality.

Oh Annie! cry, and storm, and rave!
Do anything with passion in it!
Hate me an hour, and then turn round
And love me truly, just one minute.

## LOVE AND PRUDENCE.

Do you remember that most perfect night,
In the full flush of June,
When the wide heavens were tranced in silver light
Of the sad patient moon?
Silent we sat, awed by a strange unrest;
The fathomless, far sky
Our very life absorbed, our thoughts oppressed,
By its immensity.

Lost in that infinite vast, how idle seemed
The best of human speech,
Earth scarcely breathed, so silently she dreamed,
Save when from some far reach
The faint wind sighed, and stirred the slumbering trees,
And shadowy stretch and plain
Seemed haunted by unuttered mysteries
Night on its life had lain.

We knew not what we were, or where we went,
Borne by some unseen power,
Nor in what dream-shaped realms our spirits spent

That long, yet brief half hour;
I only know that, as a star from high
Slides down the ether thin
We shot to earth, roused by a startling cry,
"You 're getting cold — come in."

## THE TWO MUSES.

My fire burnt low — at intervals
Struggling for life, it flared and sank,
And shapeless shadows on the walls
Towered up — and into corners shrank.

The black brand crackled, bent, and brok
And through the soot the eager spark
Worried, like busy worldly folk,
And burrowing, died in dirt and dark

In the dead silence, loud the clock
Remorseless ticked each second's flight —
Heart-beats of time, with quiet shock
Driving Life on to Death and Night.

Well! let Life go! — my weary heart
Is sick of things that only seem;
Love is a sham, and so is Art,
And Faith the ghost of Hope's vain dream.

A curse is on this world of ours,
Where Faith, Love, Art, are all a lie;
Beneath the curse the spirit cowers,
And their best gifts the Gods deny.

As thus I mused in desperate mood,
I raised my eyes, and faintly seen
In the dim light a figure stood,
With prayerful face and vesture mean.

Her eyes were shy with half-alarm;
Wan were her cheeks, and pale her hue;
And o'er her breast her white bared arm
With modest grace her drapery drew.

"Who art thou? and what dost thou here?
Speak! Can I help thee?" Then, "Alas!"
She said, "how own the name I bear —
So fallen, so changed from what I was.

"Once in the far and golden time,
When Freedom wore its fairest hues,
When glorious Greece was in its prime,
They called me by the name of Muse.

"My feet from worldly soil were free;
The Furies lent to me their rods.
My praise was Immortality;
My home — the temple of the Gods.

"All for my favors sought. To none
I gave them but the true and tried, —
Heroic, godlike men alone,
Whose life by Faith was purified.

"Now in the public mart my strings
For very want I fain must strum,
And hide beneath a shawl my wings,
And sing, when I were better dumb,

"Must smile to hide my heart's despair,
Must starve, or cringe to greed and lust;
Of all who hear me — ah! how rare
The few whom I can love and trust.

"The many mock my decent dress;
Their thoughts are low, their works are base;
They shock me with their vile caress,
Until, ashamed, I hide my face.

"Fallen so low, I stretch to thee
My hands, and cry, Oh! is there none
To lift me, save me, honor me,
As once in Greece in ages gone?

"No one, of all this venal throng
That take my name upon their lips,
To shield me from the shame and wrong
That shadow me in such eclipse?

"No one above this sordid mart,
With godlike spirit shrined in man,
Who with pure soul will worship Art,
Not woo her like a courtesan —

"Not pandering to the world's low taste,
With skill to tempt and to degrade —
Not like a broker, greed-debased,
Who makes of Art a vulgar trade?"

"Yes — one at least, though weak and poor,"
I cried. "I pledge this heart of mine,
Content to labor, wait, endure,
To win at last one smile of thine."

What sudden change! an aureole globed
That radiant face — a Grecian dress,
With pale and perfect draperies, robed
Her pure and stately loveliness.

Serene she smiled, and at her feet
Prostrate I fell, and bowed my head;
And silence came as calm and sweet
As silence to the peaceful dead.

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Then, suddenly, a laugh pierced through
My ears — I raised my eyes — the Muse
Had vanished; in her stead a new
Strange figure stood, in high-heeled shoes.

A creature like a Biscuit rare,
Painted and dyed, hair, eyes and face —
Tight-laced — her back and bosom bare —
All chiffons, jewels, silk, and lace.

With head thrown back and glance askant,
She laughed and leered and beckoned me;
"Great God!" I cried, "what dost thou want?
And who art thou? — and where is she?"

"She? Who? My queer old sister? Oh!
Dear solemn prude, pray who can tell?
Gone back to Greece, I hope. You know
That here she 's quite impossible.

"Poor thing, I pity her; but then
She 's such a prig — so tiresome, too,
And dresses so — and bores the men
About the Beautiful and True —

"Such silly rubbish — every word
Emphatic with a capital,
That really it is quite absurd;
We had to cut her, one and all.

"She had a grand career awhile
In Athens once, when she was young;
But here, we 've changed in taste and style, —
And she 's old, nervous, and unstrung.

"And now that we have shut her out,
Dressed in that old disgraceful shawl,
She wanders begging all about
And preaching — which won't do at all.

"And so take care — you 're young, *mon cher,*
And just beginning in your art;
Don't be imposed upon by her,
But trust me if you want a start.

"I 'm all the mode — her sails are furled.
Come down to me and have a chat;
I 'll introduce you to the world,
And put you up to this and that.

"I 've lots of things to show you, too,
Not Greek — that wretched classic Greek —
But Biscuit, Sèvres, Ormolu,
And *bric-à-brac,* and statues *chic.*

"We 're all so free — no prudish *gène.*
Such fun, you know; and there you 'll meet
Dukes, Bankers, Princes — all the men
And all the *demi-monde élite* —

"All purchasers. Such singing too —
Thérèse's style. Do all you can,
Broad as her songs are, they 're so true
You have to laugh — behind your fan.

"And then my pictures — all so bright
With brilliant colors; some so small
You need a lens to help your sight,
And wonder how they 're done at all.

"Such costumes gay — such fights and feuds —
Such vases, silks, stuffs, furniture —
Such harems, baths, boudoirs — such nudes,
Smiling at you with such *allure!*

"You 're poor! I know you can't be flush:
Don't be so shy — oh, don't say 'No!'
Pray take it — won't you? Pooh! — don't blush:
Ah, well! — at first you all say so!"

With that she finger-tipped a kiss,
Laughed, pirouetted on her toe,
Kicked out her train, and, with a hiss
Of rustling silks, turned round to go.

"Now don't forget — don't be a fool;
I count upon you! Well, — bye bye!
Sundays, you know — cards, dancing, pool,
And everything that 's *chic* and sly!

"Stop! here 's my card — I 'd quite forgot!"
With that she vanished; and I read
"*Madame La Muse — née La Cocotte,*
*Rue de Parnasse*" — and went to bed!

# COUPLETS.

## COUPLETS.

### I.

To each his separate work; the ox to drag the
plough,
The bird to sing his song upon the blossomy
bough.

I do not ask the grain and hay your acres yield,
If I may pluck the flower you trample in your
field.

How perfect nature is! the sun, and cloud, and
rain
Give me a little song, and ripen all your grain.

### II.

SHAKESPEARE.

Our nearness value lends to trivial things and
slight,
But only distance gives to lofty ones their height.

The Pyramids, to those beneath them, look not
high,
But as we go from them they tower into the sky.

So thy colossal mind, in time's perspective seen,
Still rises up and up with more majestic mien.

III.

STRIVE not to say the whole! the Poet, in his Art,
Must intimate the whole, and say the smallest part.

The young moon's silver arc her perfect circle tells,
The limitless within Art's bounded outline dwells.

Of every noble work the silent part is best,
Of all expression, that which cannot be expressed.

Each act contains the Life, each work of Art the world,
And all the planet laws are in each dew-drop pearled.

Of single stones is built the temple's Grecian state,
Yet should the poet not its stones enumerate.

The lizard gliding o'er the Pyramid's huge cone
Knows not the Pyramids, but only every stone.

Subservient to the form all details must be brought,
All images be slaves to one despotic thought.

IV.

We of our age are part, and every thrill that wakes
The tremulous air of Life its motion in us makes.

The imitative mass mere empty echo give,
As walls and rocks return the sound that they receive.

But as the bell, that high in some cathedral swings,
Stirred by whatever thrill, with its own music rings,

So finer souls give forth, to each vibrating tone
Impinging on their life, a music of their own.

V.

All Arts are one, howe'er distributed they stand;
Verse, tone, shape, color, form, are fingers on one hand.

VI.

Lift thou thyself above the accidents of life,
With pain and joy alike be friends, abjuring strife.

If in thy growing fields the tempest beat thy grain,
See! it hath blown disease from off the stagnant plain.

If Friendship seize the sword, bare thou thy
breast and wait;
Love conquers Love, but Hate hath never con-
quered Hate.

Patient the wounded earth receives the plough's
sharp share,
And hastes the sweet return of golden grain to
bear.

The sea remembers not the vessel's rending keel,
But rushes joyously the ravage to conceal.

So, patient under scorn and injury abide, —
Who conquereth all within may dare the world
outside.

VII.

Yes, thrift is very good. Respect to men of
thrift!
They stick to solid facts, and let the dreamer
drift.

The earth their mother is, their heart unto her
clings,
And since they live with her why should they
covet wings?

They find in common life a present task to do,
The distant and the dim let idle poets woo.

Yet out of earth alone was no man ever made.
The imagination gives the very soul to Trade.

The merchant schemes and dreams, with magic
numbers plays,
On speculation's wings he threads through for-
tune's maze.

Across the pathless deep his ships like shuttles
fly,
And weave together lands by needs and luxury.

With astrologic faith he on the stars relies,
And ventures all his wealth to shifting winds and
skies.

He trusts a needle's point, a few weak planks
and chart,
To bring an Eastern spice into a Western mart.

What faith in things unseen! Hath any poet's
dreams
More fancy than your plain and sober merchant's
schemes?

VIII.

LIVE not without a friend! The Alpine rock
must own
Its mossy grace, or else be nothing but a stone.

Live not without a God! however low or high,
In every house should be a window to the sky.

IX.

WHILE we are young our youth too near for Art doth lie —
Our life a poem is, but for another's eye.

Youth by projection knows how glorious manhood is,
And manhood feels youth's charm by golden memories.

Not in the present we the present charm can feel,
But Memory and Hope have Beauty's wondrous seal.

Time smelts the dross away and leaves the ore alone,
And in a magic ring it sets life's opal stone.

X.

THAT dress of thine is made of many lives; I see
Upon thy coral there the diver's misery.

Thy shawl is red with blood, for that the camel bled;
The seamstress sewed her pain into thy lace's thread.

The tortured worm gave up his tomb thy silk to
make,
The oyster bore his pearl of trouble for thy sake.

The frolic kid was flayed thy snowy hands to
hide,
A thousand cochineals to paint thy ribbon died.

Thou wouldst not crush a worm, so gentle is thy
heart,
And yet, behold! how strange a paradox thou art.

XI.

THE conscious Intellect the servant is of Art,
The unconscious Phantasy performs the master's
part.

Despite the helm and sail the vessel will not go,
Howe'er we strive, until the breath of heaven
shall blow.

Love is the only key of knowledge, as of Art,
Nothing is truly ours but what we learn by heart.

XII.

AN inward faith alone can make our life sincere,
And into Art that life transmuted should appear.

Not of a trick or lie those fairest shapes are born,
That seem like human souls that godlike forms
have worn.

The Greek in nature saw his gods half-hidden lurk,
And copying nature, wrought his gods into his work.

XIII.

NATURE in circles moves round fixed and central laws;
The spirit's spiral path a moving centre draws.

The seed results the tree, the tree results the seed,
Its ultimated fruit but to its root doth lead.

But thought strives ever up, beyond itself aspires,
New forms and higher powers are born of its desires.

Rest absolute is death; rest relative alone
To Nature must belong; the soul must on and on.

What askest thou of Death, but that the senses' door
It shall unlock and let the spirit upward soar?

Soar on and up, its God projecting as it goes,
Expanding into love, and joy, and peace — but not repose.

In utter rest the soul could never fitly dwell,
Debarred from upward growth, e'en Paradise were hell.

XIV.

We are but what we think, and must immortal be,
Else whence hath come the thought of immortality?

The limits of its sphere can nothing e'er transcend,
And thought, roam where it will, can never find its end.

Around the soul one thought of nebulous glory clings,
As Saturn is ensphered within its luminous rings.

This pours upon our life its pure and lambent light,
And brings its fullest joy when sorrow brings the night.

XV.

The East for sweet luxurious ease and rest—
For toil, and pain, and struggle is the West.

The calm siesta, pipe, and soft divan
With mild sensations, are for Eastern man.

The fierce debate, the strife for place and power,
The brain and nerve life, is our Western dower.

With all our rush and toil we scarcely move,
And lose the truest joy of living — love!

XVI.

THE Imperfect hath a charm the Perfect cannot own;
From satisfaction Hope ungirds her flashing zone.

No perfect, Nature shapes; she only hints in each,
And tantalizes with her partly finished speech.

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